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KINGSCONNELL,

A TALE.

BY MRS. GORDON,

AUTHOR OF

"THE FORTUNES OF THE FALCONARS."

"The solemn curse of a widow sad,
Above the grave of her darling dead,
Will fester and wither the joy and fame
Of the fairest lands, and the proudest name :
Nor years, nor tears, will efface the shame."

REV. J. C. EARLE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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KINGSCONNELL,

A

TALE.

CHAPTER I.

"Of noble race the ladye came."

LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

"WHERE are you, Beatrice?" called out Helen, as she entered the garden in search of her sister, one morning about a week after the departure of her father. "Come into the house. Grandmamma has sent for you."

"What is it, Helen?" answered Beatrice, advancing up the espalier walk with a book in her hand. "Did you call me?"

"Yes, they want us both to come into the parlour. Lady Bertram has called."

"Lady Bertram? What, and been shown into the parlour, just as I left it when I went out, with all those stockings that want mending spread out upon the table?"

"Yes, Beatrice. And worse than that,

Aunt Grace's old white petticoat, which she has been patching, hanging over the back of a chair; and not a book to be seen but the "Ready Reckoner," and that shockingly dirty novel from St. Michael's, that Aunt Grace left on the table. I wouldn't touch it with the tongs."

"And—" faltered Beatrice, "and is Aunt Grace there herself, in that—oh, Helen! that dreadful old wrapper."

"No, thank goodness! She heard the carriage, and ran off just in time, leaving her petticoat, as I told you, but the hall-door was open, and the footman must have seen her when he knocked, whether Lady Bertram did or not. Only Aunt Willie is there; and *she* is bad enough, in her old black cotton gown, and her worst cap. It is early, you see."

"But, oh dear! what harm could it do, if people would but dress in the morning as they mean to be all day?" exclaimed Beatrice. "Grandmamma is there, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Helen, "it was she who sent me to call you."

"I declare I don't think I can go in, and see all those stockings and the petticoat, and *feel* what Lady Bertram must be thinking!"

exclaimed Beatrice, stopping short as they approached the garden-gate, to which they had all this time been advancing.

"Oh ! but you must, Beatrice dear," said Helen. "It is dreadful to be sure ! I felt as if I should have died. But for all that, you must go in, for I was positively told to fetch you."

"I don't know what I would not rather do," sighed Beatrice, as they entered the house, and approached the parlour-door.

The scene within verified her worst anticipations. Never had the parlour looked so odiously untidy, or felt so oppressively close. The day was warm for the season, and sunny ; and the sun looked in at one of the windows—that to the side of the house ; yet both were closed, and the blinds of both drawn up to the very top, as if for the purpose of displaying all the dust and ashes on the hearth, and leaving no part of the room in obscurity, much though it stood in need of a Rembrandt-like depth of shadow in some places. All was unveiled, all open in the pitiless light ; stockings, petticoat, dirty novel, and "Ready Reckoner," the green table-cover pulled awry, and with threads of darning cotton adhering to its surface ; the

brown floor-cloth covering the carpet, which Beatrice often declared *never* lay smooth, at this moment more than usually ruffled and soiled-looking; the striped chintz sofa-cover all tumbled and creased; while to the senses fresh from the sweet air in the garden, the atmosphere seemed redolent of tea and toast, as if—which was literally the case,—the room had not been aired since breakfast-time.

Seated on the creased and tumbled sofa, opposite to the old lady's chair, was Lady Bertram; and by her side Miss Willie, looking even more unprepossessing than usual; stern, rigid, yet very evidently not at her ease with her visitor, than whom a more complete contrast to herself could hardly be imagined. Lady Bertram, still in the very prime of life, was a very beautiful woman. Tall and elegant in figure, she bore in face and complexion a striking resemblance to her eldest son, though with finer features, larger eyes, and a greater share altogether of personal attractions. His graceful length of limb, fine slender hands, and harmony of movement, were evidently derived from his mother. But with these points the resemblance ceased. Lady Bertram had not her son's forehead, and still less his expres-

sion of countenance. Nothing more dissimilar could be conceived, than William Bertram's look of meditative sweetness, and the *hauteur* which spoke in every line of his mother's face; and in the mouth, that most expressive feature, it was singular to observe the total difference. In both it had the same refined conformation; but that of the son denoted purity and gentleness of heart, whilst the mother's beautiful lip curled with a whole volume of scorn and suppressed satire. Yet she too had, at will, a beautiful smile, displaying still perfect teeth; and her manner, — calm, quiet, undemonstrative, full of the under-toned repose of high-breeding, was capable of expressing everything that was agreeable to those whom she felt it worth while to take the trouble of pleasing; not less than of keeping at a freezing distance, yet with perfect politeness, every one who did not take such rank in her estimation.

It need scarcely be added, that at the Grange, Lady Bertram's manner assumed the latter character. An Englishwoman, and although married to a Scotchman, yet up to that time totally unacquainted with her husband's country, the old-fashioned peculiarities of Mrs. Lockhart were naturally more striking

and more repulsive in her eyes than they would have been in those of a person more accustomed to Scotch ladies of the last century, coarse though the worthy lady in question was, even for them. And with all due deference to our southern neighbours be it remarked, that tolerance for the national peculiarities of other countries is by no means their most distinguishing characteristic; even when liberalised by foreign life, as Lady Bertram had been. But when to Mrs. Lockhart's uncouth accent, and extraordinary ways, were added the unpleasing singularities of her daughters, their style of living, and the whole aspect of their house and habits, nothing else could be expected than that their new and highly-polished neighbour should consider the whole family in the light of a necessary evil in her vicinity; a set of bores upon whom, for the sake of Sir Thomas's popularity, it was proper that she should call at times, and invite on rare occasions to her house; but with whom the idea of anything like equality or intimacy never entered her thoughts. This was her first visit to the house since Beatrice and Helen had become its inmates. They had seen her at Kingsconnell Church, and had been struck by

her stately air, which seemed if possible more remarkable as they saw her now, leaning back in the corner of the sofa, returning her low and quiet answers to the only half-understood speeches of their grandmother, or the constrained conversation of Miss Willie, whose old gown and worst cap certainly did look, as Helen had said, "bad enough," contrasted with the elegant toilette of the visitor. A whole host of painful and mortifying feelings worked upon Beatrice's sensitive mind as she entered, keenly, torturingly alive as she was to such impressions and contrasts, alike from the ideality which rendered her a worshipper of grace and beauty, and the desire for affection and approbation, combined with the absence of self-esteem, in her character. She felt Lady Bertram's cold and careless glance bring a burning glow to her cheek, when, looking towards her, Mrs. Lockhart said, "There's my eldest granddaughter, Lady Bertram. Come and speak to her ladyship, Beatrice."

Lady Bertram half rose as the young girl advanced towards her, and slightly touched her hand; then resumed something she had been saying to Miss Willie, about establishing a girls' school in the Clachan, and Mr. Car-

michael's opinion on the subject. Miss Willie bridled and tossed her head at mention of that name, but ventured on no open manifestation of dislike.

"Ye hae a high opinion of Mr. Carmichael, ma'am," said Mrs. Lockhart.

"We have had every reason to entertain one," answered Lady Bertram. "We found him a most valuable person in our family; and my eldest son regards him with great affection."

"He educated all your sons, I believe, Lady Bertram," observed Miss Willie.

"Not exactly," replied her ladyship with a smile. "He is not quite old enough to have done so. He lived with us as tutor for three years, and all my boys have in turn had instructions from him of one kind or another."

"And your daughter, Miss Bertram, did he teach her?" asked Miss Willie.

"Oh *dear* no!" answered her ladyship, slightly elevating her eye-brows. "She had her governess, of course. How do you do?" And again she half-rose from her seat as Miss Grace entered in her black silk gown, looking hurried and ill at ease, as people do look who have rushed off on the spur of the moment to dress themselves, as if their clothes and

they had not found time to get properly acquainted.

"You have not brought your young lady with you, Lady Bertram?" said she, as she seated herself, "I was half in hopes we might have seen her."

"Thank you," replied Lady Bertram. "I do not take my daughter out to visit yet. She is not out of the school-room."

"No, no, we know that. Only to a neighbour's house, I fancied you might perhaps sometimes have brought her. Here is a young lady just about her age, I believe," glancing at Beatrice, who again felt her cheeks tingle as Lady Bertram's eye fell upon her.

"Indeed?" was the only response of the latter. "My daughter is very much engaged with her governess," she added after a pause, "and I do not wish to interrupt her studies."

A few more insignificant questions and answers,—for the conversation proceeded no farther,—were followed by a move on the part of the visitor, who took leave with the chilling politeness which had marked her whole previous demeanour; and departed, rejoicing within herself that she had "got over" the worst and most tedious of all the visits which she had this day to pay.

But notwithstanding Lady Bertram's cold reception of Miss Grace's overtures, it was not long ere the agency of the kind and considerate Mrs. Sempill effected an introduction of Beatrice and Helen to her daughter ; and afterwards so far succeeded in exciting some interest in her mind respecting these young creatures and their sad history, as to induce her to sanction an intimacy between them, which speedily assumed, on both sides, the form of warm attachment, and became the great solace of the two sisters, under the manifold trials and discomforts of their home. This new and engrossing source of happiness served in some measure to console them under the bitter grief of separation from their faithful servant Jessy, to whom Mrs. Sempill, in consequence of a marriage amongst her domestics, had found herself able to offer the situation of laundry-maid at her house. It even mitigated the dread with which they anticipated the arrival of their governess, Miss Winter ; and entered upon the new sphere of task-work consequent on that event.

CHAPTER II.

"Look here upon this picture, and on this."

HAMLET

"AND Emily said her brothers were come, did she, Helen?"

"Yes, Mr. Bertram four days ago, and Mr. Arthur and Hugh the night before last. They were going to have a great *battue* in the pheasant-covers to-day, in the park. There are several other people come too."

"And who was the young lady who Aunt Grace said walked over yesterday with Emily and Mademoiselle?"

"Oh! I was so sorry you were out, Beatrice! that was Mary Adair, the companion of whom you have heard Emily talk so much. She is a great heiress; Lord and Lady Mountjoye's only daughter, Dr. Chisholm says; They arrived two days ago."

"And is she very pretty, Helen?"

"No, not at all. She is very tall—as tall as Emily, though she is a year younger; and fair, nice-looking, you know, but her hair is red. She was very pleasant and good-humoured. Come, Beatrice, all our things for the evening are put up now. I shall run down and bid the maids give them to little Jamie to carry over to Kingsconnell."

It was a bright, exhilarating frosty day, near Christmas-time, and the sisters were departing with light hearts to spend it with their friend. They proceeded through the leafless woods, crisp with the hoar-frost, and glittering in the sunshine; and on their entering the demesne of Kingsconnell, the sound of dropping shots, and the appearance, at some distance, of sundry keepers and sportsmen, announced that the *battue* was begun. They found Emily, with her friend Miss Adair, looking out for them upon the terrace; and the day passed as swiftly, and in the same manner, that days at Kingsconnell were wont to do. It was Lady Bertram's custom, as it is with most mothers in her position, to leave her daughter entirely under the jurisdiction of her governess; and to Beatrice and Helen, their long mornings in the school-room with Emily and Madlle. Von

Lindheim, and their rambles through the lovely Pleasance,—above all, their afternoons spent in the library, were infinitely more delightful even than the evening hours in the brilliant drawing-room. The library in particular was a haunt of which Beatrice never felt weary. Soon after her initiation into the house she had recognised the unforgotten picture of the Master of Kingsconnell in the dark corner of that apartment, to which, as we have seen, Sir Thomas had banished it; and thenceforward it became one of her most cherished pleasures to steal to a position opposite it, and remain gazing on the beautiful countenance, and recalling every particular, and every word, connected with the day,—an era as it seemed in her life's history,—when she had first seen it.

It appeared that Emily had no idea of the history of this picture; she only expressed her surprise to her friend, on finding her so engaged, at her father's refusing it a place amongst the other family portraits. Beatrice preserved a prudent silence respecting her own superior information, but the very feeling of a mystery thence attaching to the subject, independently of its own strange and exciting associations, only caused her mind to dwell upon it more in-

tently. On the day in question, the young party having as usual, repaired to the library, as the short winter's afternoon began to close, had for some time occupied themselves in turning over the many splendid volumes of engravings with which it abounded ; but from which Beatrice had at last quietly withdrawn herself into her favourite corner, near the fire, whose blazing light fitfully illuminated the recess opposite, where the picture hung. She remained there till roused from her reverie by the entrance of a servant with lights, who brought Miss Bertram a summons to speak with his lady in her dressing-room. Miss Adair remained a few minutes behind her, looking over the Shakespeare-gallery with the two sisters. Then she also left the room ; and Beatrice, taking up a book, seated herself in a low deep arm-chair near the fire-place, leaving Helen alone at the table.

Suddenly, without her being aware that any one had entered the room, a hand was laid on her shoulder, and a voice addressed her with, " Emily, my dear, my mother wants you. I beg your pardon !" the speaker exclaimed, as Beatrice looked up with a smile, followed by a start which she could not suppress, on catch-

ing a view of the youth who stood bending over her chair. It was himself! The living, breathing likeness of the Master of Kingsconnell stood before her, as if, save for the different dress, he had but that instant descended from his frame. The resemblance was extraordinary. There was the same oval contour of countenance, the same dark, glowing complexion, the forehead—broad and full rather than high,—even the rich dark brown hair curling over the beautifully-formed head, for the Master was painted without powder. The same eyes, large, long-cut, of that violet-blue which seems to deepen into black, the thin well-opened eye lid fringed with long black lashes; the aquiline nose, with its fine arched nostril, the exquisite mouth and rounded chin. All were there; the very image which for months had haunted the dreams of Beatrice, embodied in the form of a tall slender lad of seventeen; whom, when her momentary surprise was over, she guessed to be the Arthur Bertram of whom she had heard, and latterly had thought, so much.

“I have the pleasure of speaking to Miss Lockhart, I presume?” said the youth, in a tone and manner of graceful ease, not quite

unmixed with timidity. "I am afraid I startled you ; but I took you for my sister, for whom I was desired to look."

"Emily is gone to Lady Bertram, a few minutes ago," replied Beatrice. There was a pause. Overcome by the sensitive shyness which is sometimes so great a trial to a girl at that age, she felt as if she could not utter another word, and that it would have been the greatest possible relief if he had gone away ; much though she would have enjoyed sitting and looking at him, had there been any one else present to talk in her place ; but nothing seemed farther from his thoughts. He moved round towards the fire-place, and standing in front of her chair, with his shoulder against the mantel-piece, entered into a conversation on the weather, the scenery, the *battue* of the morning, the hopes of continued frost, and of curling on the Kingsconnell ponds, &c., &c., as if he felt it a duty to entertain his sister's visitor. The answers he elicited were brief at first : but there was an infectious charm of frankness and animation in Arthur Bertram's manner, beneath whose influence, shyness could not long subsist ; and Beatrice very soon found herself talking to him almost

as easily as she would have done to Emily. Their conversation gradually glided on from common-place to more interesting topics; and Arthur discovering with pleased surprise that the book on which his new companion was engaged was Coleridge, took it up, and in illustration of something he was saying, began reading aloud passage after passage from "Christabel" and "Genevieve," in a tone of passionate feeling, and with a profound appreciation of their beauties, scarcely to be expected from one who, almost man as he looked, was still a school-boy. Beatrice, the while, the finest chords of her poetical nature vibrating in unison with these thrilling sounds, sat entranced, absorbed in listening, and in gazing. They were at last interrupted by the return of Emily, with a summons for her companions to come to tea in the school-room.

"Well, Beatrice," she said, as they went upstairs together; "so Arthur has been reading poetry to you?"

"Oh, *so* beautifully, Emily!" exclaimed her friend. "I never heard Coleridge *really* read before."

"His reading is exquisite," returned Emily; "he has such a passion for poetry.

So has my eldest brother; and Arthur has read so much with him; it has been a great advantage. And is he not handsome, Beatrice? And now do *you* see any likeness to that picture?"

"I do indeed," replied her companion; "a very great likeness."

"I was sure you would. One must be blind not to see it."

Arthur, on his part, on finding himself left alone, retreated from the library, and made his way to his elder brother's sitting-room, where his application for admittance was readily answered, and where he found William extended in his reading chair at one side of the fire, and Mr. Carmichael, who dined at Kingsconnell that day, and had as usual been requested by his friend to come two hours before dinner, occupying another of the various comfortable seats which the room afforded, at the opposite side.

"William," said Arthur, after warmly shaking hands with his former tutor, and exchanging some words with him. "William, I have just made a new acquaintance."

"Indeed," answered his brother; "and who may that be?"

"One of Emily's companions; and a very pretty girl," replied the youth. "Such a bright looking creature as one does not often see. Miss Lockhart."

"Miss Lockhart?" exclaimed Mr. Carmichael. "Are the Miss Lockharts here to-day?"

"They are my sister's guests in the school-room, you know," said William, smiling; "the convent, as we used to call it, Carmichael. And how came Mademoiselle to admit you, Arthur?"

"I should like to see Mademoiselle unbar her gates for *me*," exclaimed Arthur. "No, I met the young lady in the library. Coming in behind her, I fancied it was Emily, and spoke to her under that impression, and you can't think how she started. I dare say she took me for a ghost."

"I dare say she did," replied William. Mr. Carmichael and he exchanged glances.

"You know these Miss Lockharts, Mr. Carmichael?" said Arthur. "This is the eldest, I suppose? But she is very young—almost a child."

"No child in mind and feeling," replied Mr. Carmichael. "Yes, I know them very well. They are your nearest neighbours here."

"I know, grand-daughters of that vulgar old woman I have heard my mother talk of," returned Arthur. "What a pity!"

"And daughters," added Mr. Carmichael, "of one of the most charming women I ever knew."

"And their mother?" pursued the boy.

"Is dead," replied Mr. Carmichael. "They are now in mourning for her."

"Indeed," exclaimed Arthur; "tell me something about them." And when Mr. Carmichael had given him all the information in his power, "I hope," he said, "that Emily does all she can to make those poor girls happy when they are with her? What a life these horrid old aunts must lead them! These sort of things make one quite sad."

"Arthur, you are not dressed," said his brother; "you will be too late for dinner."

"I know, William. But this is such a comfortable fire. You have had the good sense to dress before you sat down at it, I see. I must go, I suppose, though I feel very loath to move."

"That boy has a kind heart," observed Mr. Carmichael, as Arthur left the room. "There's something irresistibly attractive about him."

"There is," replied the elder brother, "every year that he lives adds to the interest as much as to the anxiety which he inspires. He is a creature whom female influence above all others will make or mar."

But our narrative has lingered too long among the scenes of early youth. We must now quit the sources, and explore the streams as they widen out in their onward course "down the dark and savage vale." We have not space to dwell at further length on the events of the Christmas-holidays which first brought Beatrice Lockhart into *rapport* with Arthur Bertram. We may not detail their after-meetings, nor the rapid growth of their intimacy. Nor can we do more than glance at the events of Christmas-day, when the kind-hearted Reginald Sempill requested permission to drive Beatrice and Helen to St. Michael's, they being engaged to dine at Sempilltower with all the rest of the Grange party; and when the whole family of Sir Thomas Bertram made their appearance at the chapel. Lady Bertram was of course an Episcopalian; although her feelings on the subject were not sufficiently deep to have induced her to offer any opposition to Sir Thomas, who

piqued himself on the hereditary Presbyterianism of his family—more as a political appendage belonging to them than on any other account. But what words can paint the consternation of the magnates of the Clachan when it was understood that Mr. Carmichael had actually driven over to chapel with Mr. Bertram, and had conducted himself when there as one accustomed to such places of worship all his life? Who can express the emotions of Miss Willie Lockhart, on being credibly informed that the young clergyman had avowed it as his opinion, that all who called themselves Christians were bound to keep Christmas-day, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday, and that he deeply regretted that the Church of Scotland had laid aside these and many other solemn observances? No words can do justice to the theme, nor shall we attempt it; but shall leave that, with many other circumstances colouring the next four years, to the reader's own imagination.

CHAPTER III.

“ Eleven years we now may tell
Since we have known each other well ;
And sure, through many a varied scene,
Unkindness never came between.
Away these winged years have flown
To join the mass of ages gone ;
And though deep marked, like all below,
With chequered shades of joy and woe
Yet now, days, weeks, and months, but seem
The recollection of a dream,
So still we glide down to the sea
Of fathomless eternity.”

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

“ REGINALD ! dearest Reginald ! And do I really—really—see you again ?”

Such was the exclamation of Mrs. George Sempill, as on a certain day of the month of November, 1825, she found herself clasped in the arms of her brother-in-law.

“ My very self, Helen. And this is *your* very self, dear. And not so very much altered

either. A little thinner, a little paler, certainly, but wonderfully like the Helen I parted from five long years ago ; God bless you dear ! I could find in my heart not altogether to regret the occasion which has brought us together once more, sad and anxious as it is."

This occasion was the illness of Walter Sempill, the father of the two boys formerly introduced to the reader, and brother to Reginald and George. Consumptive symptoms being apprehended by his medical attendants, he had been advised to pass the winter in Madeira, whither his wife had prepared to attend him, leaving her family under the care of a sister of her own ; and Captain Sempill, feeling for his sister-in-law, who was no traveller, had offered to accompany, and see them comfortably settled in the house taken for them by George and his wife, close to their own residence.

He now for the first time found himself alone with Helen ; and a tide of questions and recollections gushed forth with a rapidity which almost defeated its own end, like Ariosto's simile of liquid poured from an inverted bottle.

" Che nell' istretto uscir tanto s' intrica,
Ch' a goscia a goscia fuor 'esce a fatica."

"Which of all these interrogatories shall I answer first, Helen? My father and mother? Why, really they are wonderful old people. But the Major has grown so deaf that the equivoques between him and David Bryce are absolutely killing sometimes. David is an evergreen, quite, and Adam and the horses are all three so fat that Aunt Penny declares she can beat their best pace walking. But the young greys—they are the beauties! You should have seen our nephew Wat persuading your bonny niece, Helen, to let him drive her in the phaeton with them, in summer, after they were broke."

"My little darling!" exclaimed Helen. "Grown quite beyond my knowledge you say she is, Reginald?"

"Yes, she's very nearly as tall as Beatrice now, though she is only fifteen, didn't you say? A lovely girl she is!" added Reginald with enthusiasm. "I prophesy that she will be the beauty of the county. Such a graceful, elastic figure, and such a sweet face! Those large brown eyes, with their long, long black lashes, will make wild work amongst the beaux, by-and-bye. She sings so sweetly too! To hear the two girls sing together is quite de-

lightful ! My father enjoys their old ballads beyond anything."

"I suppose," said Helen, "that their governess has done them some justice in their education."

"Up to a certain pitch, I have no doubt of it," answered Reginald. "A narrow-minded, freezing icicle she is, and I have often felt quite sorry to see how much Helen stood in awe of her. But I fancy she is a very fair governess, so far as teaching goes. She is still at the Grange, as I conclude you know, but Beatrice is pretty well emancipated from her control now ; only she is one of those creatures who will always be learning something. Our pet Helen is an idle puss, I take it. Beatrice has done wonders for herself in the way of acquirements, and besides Miss Winter's task-work, she has had able assistance from two other teachers."

"Miss Bertram's German governess is one, I know," said Helen.

"Precisely. A most accomplished woman I understand, and one who I believe expresses the very highest opinion of Beatrice's talents. She took to studying German with her ; but then the Bertrams always go to England before

Easter, and remain in London till the season is nearly out, as well, I suppose, that her ladyship may enjoy the gaiety, as that the daughter (who, by the way is growing up a splendid creature,) may have masters, for she is not out yet. They never return to Kingsconnell till near the time that Hugh's holidays begin. So then poor Beatrice's German studies threatened to come to a stand-still, when——"

"Mr. Carmichael offered her his assistance," said Helen, smiling. "Yes, she writes me everything, you know; and remembering the grave, silent, almost shy man he appeared to me, I felt a little amused at it. But his kindness in that way has been indefatigable."

"Yes," returned Reginald. "He used to go whenever he had time, to give her a German lesson in the school-room, where Miss Winter performed dragon. And he did not stop at German. I know he taught her Latin, and I would not quite answer for it that there were not some lessons in Greek, much to the indignation of that spiteful old tabby, Miss Willie, who has always made poor Beatrice's studies a bone of contention. She is for ever jibing at her."

"My poor Beatrice!" exclaimed Helen,

her eyes filling with tears. "She has always abstained from dwelling on these things to me, though it has been plain to me from the tone of her letters, that the Grange has been no home of love and tenderness to either of them. She has been deeply indebted to Mr. Carmichael, I am sure; less for his teaching, than for his lending her books, and directing her reading in a way which there was no one else to do. It was just what her dear mother dreaded above all things, that she should be left amongst people so woefully unfit to guide a mind like her's."

"Carmichael is deeply interested in her," said Reginald. "In fact, for almost any other man of his age, it would have been a most dangerous thing for his own peace, you know, Helen, to be brought into such perpetual contact with a girl like Beatrice, even with a Miss Winter mounting guard over her. But he is a sort of ascetic, a man of books; the kind of man who might have been a monk; so it was all very well. Beatrice is a bewitching creature, I must say."

"And yet not regularly beautiful, not so much so as Helen, I imagine?"

"No, certainly not. I don't know what it

is, I am sure. If you take her face to pieces, the features are not regular, I fancy! I can't tell. I have no distinct impression of her features. I know there is a lovely mouth, which is what I always look at first, for though I am not a scientific physiognomist, I have a theory of my own about mouths, and the indications of temper and disposition they afford. And her's is beautiful;—so are the teeth, and so is the smile that shows them. I don't know anything about the nose. I know there is an exquisite complexion, clear, and fair, and pure, and a frequent blush, like the deepest pink of a rose."

"Why, Reginald," exclaimed Helen, smiling, "you are getting quite poetical."

"Well, Helen, I assure you the theme is inspiring. And then the creature has the whitest, broadest forehead I ever saw, shaded by those long, dark-brown curls of her's; and such bright eyes! eyes of no particular colour—something between hazel and gray; eyes that laugh, and almost speak, and yet look as if they could shed many a tear too. It is the brightest, —most expressive face! It has a thousand meanings."

"And she is not very tall, you say?"

"Neither tall nor short, a nice height; and

a pretty, light, graceful figure. They both look so thoroughly *ladies*; that indefinable air which there is no mistaking—so much tact and natural good breeding. I assure you, Helen, I am not singular in my admiration of Beatrice;—young Arthur Bertram is deeply smitten with her, or I am much mistaken.”

“I began to suspect something of the kind,” said Helen. “Her letters were once so full of him, and for the last two years his name has scarcely occurred in them; though she writes as enthusiastically as ever of her friend, Miss Bertram, and of the enjoyment she experiences in the romantic and poetical associations of Kingsconnell.”

“It is a splendid place,” returned Captain Sempill, “and the renovation of it,—the blending of modern elegance and luxury with its antiquated stateliness, has been most skilfully and tastefully done. They are fine young people too—especially the two elder brothers,—something accomplished and intellectual about them,—quite out of the common way. Arthur has not left Cambridge yet; and I believe is expected to take high honours, as his brother did.”

“And Beatrice and he?”—

“Why, it has been a boy-and-girl flame

for long ; but this last summer it appeared to me when I saw them together, something more. You know I have rather a knack at observing things, Helen—in a quiet way ; and one thing I remarked, was, that when the Kingsconnell family were absent, we scarcely ever saw your nieces in church. Unless the day were very bad they used to walk over to St. Michael's, and remain the rest of the day with Miss Alexander, who sent them home in the evening. But as soon as the front loft was filled again, these two young faces began occasionally to re-appear in the Grange one."

"Oh ! Reginald," interrupted Helen, "you do not mean to say that my nieces are in the habit of quitting their own Church for the Presbyterian one ! You smile and shake your head ! You cannot enter into my feelings on that subject,—but I am truly,—truly grieved to hear it. And the motive !—Alas, alas !"—she paused, and a gush of tears came to her eyes, for at that moment there returned upon her soul the memory of an oft-repented, but unforgotten sin of her own youth connected with the chapel at St. Michael's.

"I now understand," she resumed after a minute's silence, "the meaning of a letter which

I had very lately from Mr. Malcolm, in which he laments his seeing less of the girls than formerly, and speaks in a tone of deep regret of their unfavourable position for the cultivation of sound Church-principles, whose inestimable value, he says, every year of his life causes him more keenly to feel. He alludes,—dear good old man,—to his earnest supplications on behalf of these lambs of his flock. May they be heard and answered !—Yes, Reginald, I see you think me grown very bigotted,—but”——

“I did not say that, Helen ; but in old days you would not have thought it so much harm to go now-and-then to the Kirk. I grant you people ought not to go there from motives like those we suspect in this instance, but the poor dear child is but young,—and young hearts must be tenderly judged by us who are not so juvenile as we have been.”

“I, at all events,” said Helen, “dare not presume to judge them. But I was not talking of that. I grant you I did not think seriously enough of many things formerly, which have been more solemnly brought home to my heart of late years, and none more so than the responsibility of Church-privileges, and the evils of so called liberality on such subjects. But

my poor dear Beatrice, Reginald, that creature with a heart so capable of deep and passionate attachment,—and so unguarded—so unguided ! I tremble for her. I dread to think of the possibility of her having already ventured her happiness on so uncertain a chance.”

“It must always be a risk, indeed, Helen ; man and woman do not meet on equal terms at that game, I doubt. But he is a fine, warm-hearted, honourable lad, I should say. I like Arthur Bertram exceedingly ; and as to my mother and Aunt Penny, they think him perfection. Your sex—blessings on them ! always give a handsome face credit for every virtue. It will all come right, I hope and trust.”

“I, too,” said Helen, “must hope and trust, for that is all I can do. It has been a long effort to learn to do so. And there are times, as the perilous season of youth approaches for these young creatures, when I feel that I scarcely dare anticipate the future, which I am powerless to direct. I have much need, as a voice from the grave once said to me, of ‘faith and patience.’”

There was a brief silence ; and Helen’s hand received a warm and kindly squeeze from her brother-in-law.

“We have not spoken on *one* subject yet,

Helen, dear, though I dare say it has been near enough to your lips several times ? ”

“ You mean,” said Helen, with an effort, —“ you mean Harry Lockhart’s second marriage ? I—I could not quite trust myself to speak of it,—Reginald.” Her voice faltered, but with the acquired habit of self-command which years of silent struggling with her own spirit had taught her—she swallowed down her tears, and went on in a calm voice. “ I would not be unjust to him, poor fellow ! No man ever had more excuse for a second choice, so estranged from his children as his profession has caused him to be,—and with only that comfortless—*unhome-like* home to return to.”

“ Precisely what my mother and aunt say,” replied Captain Sempill. “ And very much what the girls feel, I imagine. My mother was charmed with the candid, generous, dutiful manner in which both talked to her on the subject, even whilst Beatrice’s eyes were streaming with tears over the memory of her own dear mother. She said her father had written most kindly to her and Helen ; and that they would do their best to love his wife.”

“ Dear girls ! ” exclaimed Helen. “ May she but be a person calculated to render them

happier than they have been of late years !— And him too. Poor Harry ! he could not have had any comfort in returning to the Grange last spring.”

“Comfort ? None. He neither had nor gave any. It was distressing to see how depressed and gloomy, and unlike his former self, he had become. But after the first two months, he really was very little there, constantly going back and forwards to England ; so we all began to surmise something of this kind. It is odd how little he has told any one about his bride !”

“All he tells me,” said Helen, “is that this Mrs. Lorton is the young widow of a brother-officer, and has one child, a little girl.”

“That is all he tells any body ; except that I believe he intimated to his mother, that she had an independent fortune, which a little mollified the old lady. Why, I know not, she and Miss Willie were excessively indignant when the first tidings reached them, though they seem now to have become a little more reconciled to the prospect. As to poor Miss Grace, she was in the deepest distress at the idea of her brother giving the girls a step-

mother. She idolizes them both, but Beatrice in particular."

"Poor Grace!" said Helen, smiling, "I fear she is not the most judicious friend they could have, much though she may love them. I shall be most painfully anxious to hear what you all think of Harry's wife. I must force myself to call her so."

"We shall none of us see her until next autumn, I fancy," said Captain Sempill. "He is at Brighton now, where it seems she is living, and he does not intend to be in Scotland again before his marriage. They mean to make a tour on the Continent, and come down to the Grange on their return. It will be a nervous time for the poor dear girls, and all of us, for we feel such an interest in them."

The conversation dwelt for some little time longer on this engrossing theme, when some incidental mention of the Bertram family again brought it back to them.

"Mr. Bertram, Reginald?" asked Helen, "how is he? I was grieved to hear from Beatrice how ill he had been. I have always felt such an interest in him."

"Poor fellow! he is much, much worse—most alarmingly ill!" said Captain Sempill. "I assure you there have been many wise heads in the Clachan and in higher places, shaking over the last accounts of him. It is very melancholy. He is so much liked. A most promising young man."

"Dear! how sad!" said Helen. "And all the result of an accident, was it not? Can you tell me the particulars, Reginald?"

"Yes," he said, "it occurred last October twelvemonth. Young Bertram has travelled a great deal since he left Cambridge; indeed has been little at home, except that he always passed some months every summer at Kingsconnell, for he is much attached to the place. He went last autumn to Sicily, whence he was returning, on his way to spend the winter at Rome, when, by some strange mismanagement, the vessel he sailed in was wrecked off Castel-a-Mare, near Naples. There were several lives lost amongst the crew and passengers, and would have been more, it was said, but for his exertions. He was a first-rate swimmer, and was thus the means of saving several persons; amongst others, an English gentleman,—I forget his name, who, with his son, a young boy,

was returning from an excursion into Sicily, having left his family at Castel-a-Mare."

"And it was then he received the injury of which I heard?"

"Yes, it was a severe blow on the chest from some part of the wreck. He thought little of it after the first, and probably neglected it, but the consequences were very serious. He had a dangerous illness in the gentleman's house; but recovered, and came over in the following spring to join his family in London. But he appeared to have found the gay life they lead there more than he was equal to; for he came down alone to Kingsconnell in the beginning of June, looking so ill, so altered,—so depressed in spirits! It seemed as if a complete blight had come over him. I never saw so sad a change in any one. I went frequently to visit him, and saw an alteration for the worse in his appearance every time, though he always exerted himself to talk and seem cheerful. And Carmichael, who was with him constantly, was evidently quite alarmed. Still he would not allow that he was ill; till at last Arthur came home from Cambridge, and he took fright at once. They are greatly attached to each other, these two brothers; and William could

not refuse to have Dr. Chisholm called in when Arthur made it his request."

"And Dr. Chisholm thought him going into a consumption, Beatrice wrote me."

"He did. Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram were written for, and came down. I believe he thought himself dying. However, he rallied, became wonderfully better in a short time, and at last set off for Italy in the beginning of September, where they were all in hopes that a winter would quite restore him to health. But I am very sorry to say, that only two days before I left home Sir Thomas set off at an hour's warning, in consequence of a letter from an English physician at Naples, announcing that his son had been taken suddenly and alarmingly ill with bleeding from the chest, proceeding, there was no doubt, from the injury he had sustained the previous year. This gentleman said that his strength was so completely prostrated, that another attack might prove fatal. The family were in the greatest distress, as you may well believe, when I left. I made Mr. Carmichael promise to write and tell me what accounts came of him, for I feel much interested in young Bertram. He was not one of the least affected of the party, for he loves him

like a brother. They were very much together ; and I used sometimes to think, indeed, from things Sir Thomas said last summer, that he fancied Carmichael was doing his son no good, —filling his mind with too many of his new theories, to the exclusion of more practical matters.”

“ New theories, Mr. Carmichael ? What are they, Reginald ? ”

“ I can’t exactly say ; but there certainly is a change in Carmichael. It had begun before poor old Dr. Grindlay’s death ; but has been much more manifest since. He is a prodigious admirer of a preacher who is making a great noise in London just now,—a Scotchman,—the Rev. Edward Irving ; he knew him long-ago in Glasgow, it seems, and actually went up to London last winter on no other errand, I believe, than to hear him. Since then, we have all observed a change in Carmichael’s preaching, and even in his conversation a certain tone of mysticism I can’t exactly describe. Beatrice, your niece, delights in it, and so do the young Bertrams ; but we douce old folk are not so easily satisfied. And then Carmichael dwells much more than he used to do on the ancient discipline of the Kirk ; and wants to revive it.

He has given great offence lately to some of his elders by endeavouring to restore an obsolete mode of shaming certain culprits, which I cannot farther particularize! As to Miss Menie Mark, the evergreen, or rather the ever-sour, she has long ago left his church; and so have Miss Willie Lockhart, and your nieces' governess, Miss Winter, who is her dear friend, and as bitter a Puritan as herself. They go regularly to the meeting-house at Gatesford."

"Dear, dear!" exclaimed Helen, "what changes! And my nieces' governess a Dissenter! It is too grievous. How can I wonder at their Church-principles being unsteady—poor dear girls? How can I avoid the deepest regrets on their account? Dear Reginald! I could go on talking with you for ever, but it is time to dress for dinner, I declare! Oh, when, when shall I see all these familiar faces and places with my bodily eyes again!"

CHAPTER IV.

“O! zarte Sehnsucht! Süßes Hoffen!
Der ersten Liebe gold'ne zeit!
Das Auge sieht den Himmel offen,
Es schwelgt das Herz in seligkeit.
O! dass sie ewig grünen bliebe
Die schöne zeit der jungen Liebe!”

SCHILLER.

It was a frosty morning in December, the same year in which the brief re-union of Captain Sempill with his brother and sister-in-law took place, when the scene of our story shifts to the school-room at the Grange. Miss Winter had at this time gone home to pay a visit to her family, the first recreation in which she had indulged herself for years, and Beatrice and Helen were left in undisturbed possession of this retreat; in which, by prescriptive custom, a fire continued daily to be lighted. The taste of the sisters had in process of time effected many improvements in their sitting-room; the

bare old spider-legged table was covered by a cloth, whose border was their own work ; and curtains of dark chintz, purchased by themselves at a time when their slender stock of pocket-money had received some unexpected addition, together with a cover of the same material for the sofa, all made by their own hands, imparted to it a look of much comfort. Besides these more substantial articles, there were a few of their best drawings hung upon the walls, and a stand of green-house flowers in the window, which the kindness of Emily Bertram kept liberally supplied from the conservatory at Kingsconnell, and which at this moment was gay with camellias, and one or two other bright winter exotics. Beside it sat Beatrice,—a volume of “Schlegel” in her hand,—but her eyes fixed on Helen, who had just entered the room, and was arranging her drawing materials at the table.

“Who told you, Helen? Are you sure it is true?”

“Quite sure, Beatrice. Lowry Mac Fyke told grandmamma, I heard him. He had just met one of the keepers in the wood.”

“But they were not expected at home for a week,” persisted Beatrice. “Mr. Bertram,—

Arthur,—was to join Lady Bertram and Emily at Lord Somerford's, on his way from Cambridge, and travel down with them."

"He did so, as I understood," said Helen; "and some illness, or something, in Lord Somerford's family, induced them to leave sooner than they intended. They positively arrived last night, Lowry says. This is Emily's first visit from home; and now I suppose she will be quite out of the school-room."

"I should think so," returned Beatrice. "She is nearly seventeen and a-half. I suppose she will be presented next London season."

"What a life is before her!" exclaimed Helen, leaning her dimpled chin on her hand, and gazing at her drawing-copy. "What a contrast to ours, Beatrice."

"I sometimes feel tempted to think so," replied her sister; "not so much for the gaiety of it, as for its beauty, music, refinement. *These* are the things—and far more than these; the love and indulgence around her, for which I should like to change places with Emily. And yet, Helen, she loves her mother, but not as you and I loved mamma. Lady Bertram and Emily are not the friends—the 'loving friends'—that mamma and I were. I would

not exchange my memory of mamma for her living mother.

‘ What are a thousand living loves
To that which cannot quit the dead ? ’ ”

“ Nor would I, Beatrice darling,” fervently added Helen.

“ And after all, Helen,” pursued Beatrice, “ you and I have many more enjoyments than any one looking only into our *aussere leben*, could imagine. In our own little sanctuary we care very little for the things that annoy us elsewhere in the house ; and what happy hours we have passed here with our books and our dreams.”

“ I love books too,” said Helen with a half-sigh, “ but they are not to me what they are to you, Beatrice. I long for something more real than books ; — companions — dancing — laughing ! and, oh dear ! how I long to be rid of Miss Winter.”

“ My poor darling ! ” exclaimed Beatrice laughing, “ ‘ I weel believe it,’ as David Bryce said the other day when Captain Sempill called out to him that the Major was out of all patience about something. But now, I sat down here resolved to read a great bit of “ Schlegel ” this morning, for I begin to feel

ashamed to see Mr. Carmichael, I have detained it so long; and so I really do not mean to talk any more at present."

There was silence for some twenty minutes, during which Helen drew very diligently. Whether or not the reading of "Schlegel" proceeded with an equal amount of diligence did not appear; but suddenly the book fell into Beatrice's lap, she started upright in her seat, becoming very pale, and her heart beating almost audibly.

"I hear a footstep coming up the espalier walk," exclaimed Helen an instant after, laying down her pencil.

The next minute, a shadow darkened the window, and a hand tapped gently on the pane, as Beatrice sprang up, her ingenuous face dyed in the deepest, loveliest pink. The window which opened to the terrace at the head of the garden was speedily raised, and admitted a young man, whose tall and graceful figure was displayed to the greatest advantage by his dark shooting-dress; and whose beautiful countenance, as he removed his cap and laid aside the gun he carried, ere advancing to greet the sisters, glowed with the very brightest hues of youth, love, and joy.

"Will you forgive me for coming up the old way, Miss Lockhart?" he asked, with a smile which lighted up his whole face like a sunbeam. "I wanted to try if I could find you here, and not in the parlour."

"We are *so* glad to see you, Mr. Bertram," was the innocent reply. "We had only just heard that you were come home. Is Emily quite well?"

"Quite well, thank you; as I have no doubt you will soon be able to ascertain for yourself." And he placed himself as he spoke in the corner of the old sofa, with the air of one returning to an accustomed seat.

"And your brother, Mr. Bertram," asked Beatrice, taking out her work, and sitting down by the table, "I hope your last accounts of him were good?"

"Better, decidedly, thank you," replied Arthur. "My father writes in much better spirits last letter. He is still very weak, and confined to a recumbent posture; but the blood-vessel has not again given way, and his physician speaks hopefully of his recovery. My mother and Emily are quite sanguine about him. I own I am still very anxious. I cannot help it; though I do not say so to them. I have

been so wretched since his illness began, and at times such a feeling of despondency comes over me in thinking of my brother—a painful impression that the ‘ Good die first, while they whose’——”

“ You must not finish that quotation,” said Beatrice; “ the remainder of it is not applicable. There are no hearts ‘ as dry as summer’s dust,’ to contrast with your brother’s.”

“ There is not a heart amongst us like his,” replied Arthur; “ nor a head either. What are your present studies, Miss Lockhart ?” he added, after a brief pause. Beatrice handed him her forsaken “ Schlegel.” “ I see this is Carmichael’s,” he said, after examining it. “ Have you many books on hand just now? Not many, you say. I am glad of that; for I stuffed my pockets full of various novelties in literature, in hopes you might like to have them.”

“ How very, very kind,” exclaimed Beatrice.

“ Kind !” ejaculated Arthur; “ how can you call it so ?” He proceeded to empty the pockets of his shooting coat of several new books, inscribed with his own name, which the two girls eagerly turned over and examined.

ast of all appeared a thin parcel put up in paper.

"This," said Arthur, taking it up, and proceeding to undo it, with some slight degree of embarrassment apparent in his manner, is a book—a new book; I brought down a copy of it for Carmichael; and—and Emily thought you would be charmed with it. She desired me to request your acceptance of it." He placed in her hand as he spoke a beautifully bound copy of the "Christian Year."

"I am exceedingly obliged to Emily," said Beatrice, blushing deeply from pleasure. "Pray thank her very much from me, Mr. Bertram. But why did she not add to her kindness by writing my name in it? I wish she had done so."

"Perhaps," replied Arthur, colouring almost as much as herself; "you will allow me to remedy that mistake, Miss Lockhart?" And scarcely waiting for an answer, he sat down at the table, and wrote upon the fly-leaf of the volume, the name of "Beatrice Lockhart," followed by the date. Then taking up the book, he proceeded to read to his companions various passages from its pages, whose calm moonlight beauty delighted Beatrice, not the less for the

medium by which they were conveyed to her ear—a voice of no ordinary harmony and pathos, guided by the most exquisite poetical feeling. Their reading was not confined to Keble. Although the fine taste of Arthur Bertram had been charmed by his poetry, at that time opening out a new era in the English Church, not less than in that style of literature, yet he was of the age and temperament, and lived in the period when Byron, Shelley, all that was intense and passionate in the poetry of our own and other countries, was worshipped, rather than admired; and when, we unhappily are compelled to add, the tendencies of that fascinating poetry exercised an influence too often fatal—and always perilous, over many young and gifted minds, more especially amongst men. It was in the deep and passionate voice of Arthur Bertram, that Byron's long-interdicted verse had first reached the ears of Beatrice. It was his persuasions which had first induced her, not more than a year previously, to consider herself sufficiently advanced in mind to be no longer fettered by these restrictions; which, strong as was the temptation, she did not even then break through without a pang of self-reproach. Arthur and

she never met, that their principal occupation did not consist in reading poetry of this description, for the love of it in both was a passion; and now, time flew unheeded by, while his voice continued to pour into her enraptured ear the winged words of genius; or while laying down the book, they entered into an animated discussion, beginning with the subject of their reading, and embracing, ere it ended, more things in Heaven and earth than are dreamt of in the philosophy of any but the young, the gifted, and the loving.

Helen, the while, went on drawing, and listening as long as she could; then took up one of Arthur's books, at that time also a new one, "The Diary of an Ennuyée," and presently became entranced in its pages. Finally, recollecting, with a quiet consideration which belonged to her character, that luncheon-time was approaching, and that to prevent a hue and cry after them both, it was necessary that one should appear in the parlour, she stole unperceived from the room, and repaired to the above-mentioned apartment, where she found no one but the old lady; both her aunts having walked out in different directions. The absence of Beatrice passed unnoticed, thanks

to the free and easy habits of the house, with regard to the mid-day meal; and Helen returned in due course of time to the school-room, and found her two companions as she had left them; except that in place of reading "Cain, a Mystery," they were immersed in a discussion on the invisible world.

Arthur Bertram's was one of those minds in which, no uncommon conjunction in the early part of the present century, a strong natural bias towards religion, at least towards all that is poetical in religious sentiment, was combined with a very great deal of doubt and practical infidelity. His brother, in whom the same unhappy turn of mind existed, had conscientiously abstained from infecting him with his own scepticism; but it seemed that a very different process had led both astray in the same direction. Both were characters of no ordinary stamp; minds of singular intellectual power; both naturally inclined to struggle upwards, and unhappily warped aside; but the calm purity of William's was strongly contrasted with the fire and impetuosity, the passion and excitability, of Arthur's. Perhaps no one, save Mr. Carmichael, had ever heard the former avow the sentiments which he had un-

fortunately been led to adopt at Cambridge; whereas it was impossible to know the latter intimately, without being frequently pained by some startling sophistry, or some implied doubt.

"But why," said Beatrice, in answer to a speech of the kind, which grated distressingly on her ear, and which, with all her sex's weakness in logical gifts, she had only bewildered herself in trying to confute, "why do you not discuss these points with Mr. Carmichael? You could not have a better adviser."

"*You* think so, do you, who are an Episcopalian?" asked Arthur, bending his eyes upon her with a smile.

"I do not see what that has to do with the matter," she replied. "We are all agreed on that subject. I have the greatest respect for Mr. Carmichael's judgment."

"So have I," returned Arthur, "but I wish, I earnestly wish, Miss Lockhart, that I were like you."

"I wish you were like something much better than I am," said Beatrice in a tone of the most truthful simplicity. "I have been cast adrift like a plank on a wide ocean;—well, if I be not stranded at last. What am I that I should presume to advise any one?"

"What are you?" returned the youth in his low melodious voice. "If, as you say, you have been like a plank cast adrift, it is at least 'a plank from the wreck of Paradise.'"

There was a brief silence, broken by Helen; who, laying aside her book, bethought her that she might as well begin a letter to her father, which she had previously intended to write that day. She raised her head, to ask the day of the month and week, and beheld the eyes of Arthur intently fixed upon her sister's face, which was bent over her needle-work, in an attitude of profound attention. He turned aside as Beatrice looked up to answer Helen's question.

"It is Friday, dear, I think. Is it not, Mr. Bertram?"

"Friday? yes," said Arthur, starting from his reverie. "We shall meet at church on Sunday, I hope, Miss Lockhart?"

"Why," replied Beatrice looking down, "I believe we ought to be at St. Michael's."

"But can one Sunday, more or less, make much difference?" pleaded the youth. "You are so very strict, Miss Lockhart! And yet you say you delight in Carmichael's preaching?"

"So I do," said Beatrice, "but I have not been taught to go to church for the sake of

preaching alone. Do not call me strict, Mr. Bertram. I am not. I wish I were. I was very different once—long ago.”

“Forgive me if I have pained you,” exclaimed Arthur, “I did not mean it, only I had so looked forward to seeing you in church on Sunday.”

“Ought one to go there from such a motive?” asked Beatrice in a low voice, and colouring deeply.

“No, certainly, but is it not something to be the means of bringing some to church, who might otherwise seek a pretext for avoiding it?”

Beatrice did not answer. She felt the sophistry of the argument, but remained silent. Meanwhile the short winter’s day began perceptibly to darken, and Arthur at last recollected the number of hours he had sat there.

“I must say good-bye,” he exclaimed, rising from his seat. “I am afraid I have interrupted you sadly, Miss Lockhart; but it was so unexpected a pleasure to find no Miss Winter here. May we—may my sister—hope soon to see you at Kingsconnell?”

“I hope very soon,” replied Beatrice, and so they parted. He went as he had come; and she remained, leaning against the window,

straining her eyes after the last glimpse of his graceful form, as he descended the sloping esplanade walk towards the woods.

Scarcely had he vanished from her sight, when the door of the school-room opened, and admitted Miss Grace, in walking trim.

"Why, girls," she exclaimed, "have neither of you been out this fine frosty day? For shame, you lazy things!"

"We couldn't get out, Aunt Grace," replied Beatrice with perfect ingenuousness, but blushing deeply. "Mr. Arthur Bertram called, and detained us."

"Mr. Arthur Bertram, child? How did he get into the house? I am sure none of us saw him."

"No, because he came up through the garden, the way Emily taught him. They used so often to come over together, and look in here at the window, when we were at our lessons: and so——"

"And so, Miss Beatrice, I see it all!" replied the judicious aunt, smiling and nodding her head, and looking highly pleased. "Mr. Arthur seems in a great hurry to inquire for some of his friends, when he comes here before he has been twenty-four hours at home; and

certainly *we* ought to feel highly flattered by his attention."

And with these words Miss Grace proceeded to examine the books on the table; but not finding any novels amongst them, was about to go away, when the "Christian Year" met her eye.

"What is this, Beatrice?" She turned to the fly-leaf, read her niece's name, and fixed her eyes upon her with a significant smile.

"Mr. Bertram brought it over,—it is a present from Emily to me," hastily replied Beatrice.

"From *Emily*?" said Aunt Grace, with still greater significance of tone,—again examining the handwriting in which the name was traced.

"And she forgot to write my name in it," added Beatrice; "so Mr. Bertram did it."

"So I see," returned Aunt Grace, her face beaming still more brightly than before. "Well well, Mr. Arthur seems to be a good hand at a pretty story. I fancy he knows who he's speaking to—some people will swallow any thing." And with a shower of "nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles," toke out her words, Miss Grace departed; her good-natured, imprudent spirit,

already primed as it was by her long course of study, thoroughly possessed and uplifted by the idea of a love-romance of which her niece was to be the heroine,—which she had for years past been weaving in her own brain, and settling and re-settling, till she at times mistook her own fancies for realities. And had the mischief stopped there it would have been nothing; but with her usual incapacity of retaining any thing—good or bad—she had dropped many hints of these air-drawn fancies even to the impracticable ears of the old lady and Miss Willie, and imparted them in full to her niece, in a way which would have been utterly destructive to delicacy of feeling in an ordinary girl; but which as respected the nature whose fine springs were intrusted to such ignorant and reckless management, had instead the unfortunate effect of deepening and intensifying feelings which required subduing and restraining; and of leading the imaginative spirit to brood more incessantly over the idol which it had itself created.

There was indeed little need for any one taking pains to strengthen the imaginative faculties, or excite the feelings of Beatrice Lockhart. The foreboding heart of her mother had but too truly read the future of her

child, but too clearly pictured all the dangers awaiting her undirected youth from the very excess of both. And high as was the degree of mental cultivation to which, considering her youth, she had attained, yet her unrestricted reading had in some measure added to the evil; wandering as considering her temperament it had too often done, into the realms of fiction and romance. In this respect it had been unfortunate for her, that in both the persons who had done most to form her tastes, Mlle. Von Lindheim and Mr. Carmichael, the bent of mind had been too nearly akin to her own. But the heaviest misfortunes of Beatrice had been her want of an adequate female guide at home, the unwise and injudicious fondness of her Aunt Grace, and the exemption from practical duties inevitable upon her position as the inmate of her grandmother, which left her to dwell undisturbed in an ideal world of her own; while the very annoyances, and the absence of refinement in all around her, only threw her spirit more upon itself and its dreams for consolation.

“What does Aunt Grace mean, Beatrice?” asked Helen, as the door closed after her aunt. “Does she think that Mr. Bertram was telling an untruth, and that the book was from himself and not from Emily?”

"I suppose she does," answered Beatrice.
"But it is nonsense."

In her secret soul, however, Beatrice felt that it was no nonsense. Need it be added that the "Christian Year" thenceforward became her inseparable companion? And yet it was not till years had passed, and sorrow had purified her mental vision, that the full meaning of its poetry, so pregnant with high and holy significance, made itself apparent to her spirit. Still, it was poetry whose first perusal formed an era in her inner life; and it was with a strange foreboding thrill, that on the evening of that Sunday on which, after all, she had suffered herself to be tempted away from her own church, opening the volume at random, her eye for the first time fell upon these lines :—

"No—rather steel thy melting heart
To act the martyr's sternest part —
To watch, with firm unshrinking eye
Thy darling visions as they die,
Till all bright hopes, and hues of day
Have faded into twilight grey.

Yes, let them pass without a sigh !
And if the world seem dull and dry,
If long and sad thy lonely hours,
And winds have rent thy sheltering bowers,
Remember what thou art, and where,—
A sinner, in a life of care."

CHAPTER V.

" In the spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast ;
In the spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest ;
In the spring a livelier iris changes on the burnished dove ;
In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of
love."

ALFRED TENNYSON.

AND now winter had long given place to summer. It was long since Captain Lockhart's marriage with Mary Anne, relict of Captain Stephen Lorton, R.N., had been gazetted ; and the wedded pair departed for the Continent. A large party had assembled at Kingsconnell some time before the opening of the moors, including Arthur and several of his college friends ; and the family were joyfully anticipating the return of Mr. Bertram from Italy, his health being in a measure re-established, and his anxiety to be at home having induced his medical attendant to consent to his travelling.

As the eventful twelfth of August approached, every house in that populous neighbourhood, with the solitary exception of the Grange, was opened to receive its proportion of guests. At Sempilltower an able reinforcement of youth and spirits made its appearance in the shapes of Walter and Philip, who now regularly passed their holidays at their grandfather's house. The former, a fine animated youth of nineteen, was at Oxford; the latter had been for some time a denizen of Woolwich; and the arrival of both was hailed with the utmost satisfaction in the neighbourhood, as invaluable acquisitions to every thing in the way of sport or merry-making for miles around.

Some time previously to this, Lady Bertram had issued cards for a ball, to be given on the 20th of August,—her daughter's eighteenth birth-day. This anticipated event, at all times a rare one in the country, and for half a century unparalleled at Kingsconnell, had thrown the whole neighbourhood into a ferment. The preparations were on the most extensive scale, and little else was talked of for weeks by young and old. Amongst the other invited guests, Beatrice and Helen were of

course numbered ; for the latter, although certainly too young to make her appearance in public, had been permitted, as a matter of favour, to do so that night, chiefly at the instance of her Aunt Grace, backed by Mrs. Sempill and Aunt Penny. Miss Willie and Miss Winter had at first set their faces resolutely against the enormity, and poor Helen was nearly in despair in consequence, until reassured by these able auxiliaries. The old lady of course disapproved of anything involving expense in dress or otherwise ; and finding that Miss Willie had been obliged to yield the point, though with the worst possible grace, she added her mite to what Walter Sempill called "the mountain of wet blankets" thrown upon Helen's enjoyment, by assuring her for her comfort that "she would repent o't some day ; for she might lay her account wi' being reckoned twa year aulder nor her age, at the very least, ever after." This prospect, however, had few terrors for a girl barely sixteen, to counterbalance the enchanting vision of her first ball, not to speak of her self-elected partner.

"Grandmamma," said Walter at breakfast, the morning but one before the eventful day,

"I've bespoke Helen Lockhart to dance the first dance with me, and as many more as we can manage. I hope you admire my taste?"

"Certainly, my boy," replied the gentle old lady. "You could not do better, Helen is a great favourite of mine."

"And the prettiest girl hereabouts," added Captain Sempill.

"Oh! Uncle Reginald!" exclaimed Philip, "not to be compared to Miss Bertram."

"I think not," quietly answered the Captain, buttering his toast. "In my opinion, Helen is so much the prettiest that I never thought of comparing them."

"I agree with you, Reginald," said the Laird.

"Well, I never heard of such a thing," exclaimed Philip, who, as his uncle sometimes remarked, was at this period of his life "at the height of his wisdom," and thoroughly well satisfied with his own opinions. "Why I don't mean to say that Helen's not very pretty, but she's a mere child,"—and the youth drew himself up in the proud consciousness of his seventeen years,—“a bread-and-butter miss! and Miss Bertram's a young lady—so much style!—quite the thing! and so handsome—

half a head taller than Helen too, I should say."

"If your admiration of beauty depends upon height, Phil.," retorted Walter laughing, "you ought to think Aunt Penny's dear friend Miss Menie Mark, the greatest beauty in the world; for I am sure she's taller by a head and shoulders than anybody else."

"Ah! Wat," said his uncle, "we all know your weakness for Miss Menie Mark. And speaking of Miss Menie, Aunt Penny, you saw her yesterday,—what does she say to this awful sign of the times—a ball at Kingsconnell?"

"Not much, Reginald," replied his aunt with a smile.

"Not much, Aunt Penny?" exclaimed Walter. "A very great deal, in my humble opinion. You forget that I was in the room when she called. I must tell you, Uncle Reginald, that Miss Menie thinks it 'an awful-like thing in Lady Bertram to give a ball when her eldest son is dying!' Whereupon Aunt Penny ventured to remark that Mr. Bertram was *not* dying, but instead of that, so much better as to be about to return home. 'Ah! well, Miss Menie did not know. They might *say* he was better,—but——' and then there was a solemn

pause, and a Lord Burleigh shake of the head. Moreover, Miss Menie opines that old Mrs. Lockhart has been 'very far left to herself'—to sanction her youngest grand-daughter going to a ball at her age; and 'as for *Miss Beatress*, she really must say——'

"Come, come, Wat.," interrupted Miss Muirhead with a smile, "we have had enough of poor Miss Menie's sayings."

"Spiteful old cat," murmured Walter *sotto voce*.

"What's that about cats?" quoth the Major, who sat next his nephew, and caught the sound. "David Bryce!" turning to that functionary, who had just brought his master a relay of hot chops, "did you shoot that confounded cat I told you of, that kills all the young pheasants?"

"Aye, aye, Major!" responded David. "The cat's dispooned on—safe eneuch. It wad be telling us if we could manage as easy wi' the twa-leggit cats, that does far waur mischief nor killin' a wheen pheasants."

"I was much pleased," began Mrs. Sempill, when the laugh excited by David's speech had ceased, and he himself left the room,—“I was really quite touched, Penny, by Jessy

Christie's coming and asking my leave to go down to the Grange on the night of the ball, and dress her young ladies. She says there's nobody there who can make their hair nice, or do anything about them as she can do ; and that one evening lately, when she had leave to go and drink tea with Miss Bertram's maid, she contrived to gain a great deal of insight into the newest fashion of hair-dressing, and so forth, from her, so that she considers herself quite competent to all that they will require. Poor soul ! she says she always used to look forward to dressing Miss Lockhart for her first ball !—so of course I said I should be most happy to let her go."

"Poor Jessy. It does her great credit," said the Laird. "I hope they will be happy, these young things, I am sure."

"We'll do all *we* can," exclaimed Walter. "Won't we, Uncle Reginald ?"

"That *we* shall, Wat.," replied his uncle ; "and no doubt our efforts will be crowned with success, for everybody knows how irresistible *we* are. Who is going from the Grange, Aunt Penny ?"

"Only Grace, with her nieces," was the reply. "Of course Miss Willie declared at

once against countenancing any such scenes by her presence."

"And no great loss, old Frump!" ejaculated Master Phil., for which offence against good-breeding he received a lecture from his grandfather.

"I was delighted to hear, Lilly," said Aunt Penny, as the old ladies proceeded to the drawing-room, leaving the gentlemen to discussions respecting the scene of the day's sports, "that Miss Violet Alexander had presented the two girls with very pretty white dresses for the ball, and had them made in Edinburgh, and sent out, with everything else they required. Grace Lockhart told me yesterday, and I forgot to mention it before; but I was sure you would be happy to hear it too."

"That I am, Penny," exclaimed Mrs. Sempill, "very happy indeed. I was just wondering how the poor dears would manage about their dress; for nobody takes any charge of it; and I never liked to ask them for fear of hurting their feelings."

"It gives me great satisfaction," pursued Aunt Penny, pulling forward the huge frame containing her worsted rug, "to see Walter's admiration of Helen Lockhart. I suppose

either my brother nor you would have any objection, Lilly?"

"If it comes to that, Penny," replied Mrs. Sempill with a smile, "I daresay not. Only remember he has parents, who claim the first right in him. And then they're both very young, Penny; and I do think it is a great loss to young people to have their names too soon joined together in that sort of way. The less said about it the better."

"Yes," said Aunt Penny, with a sigh. "I wish young men always knew their own minds; or at least that they would not put it in ill-natured people's power to talk in the way they do sometimes. I wish Mr. Arthur Bertram would go round to the front door when he calls at the Grange, and not tap at the school-room window, just at the time when Miss Menie Mark happens to be eating gooseberries in the garden with Willie Lockhart, so as to see him come up the walk! And then Miss Willie has not the common honesty, or good sense, or kindness, to go and tell her niece plainly that this is an improper freedom for a young man to take (poor innocent, motherless creature! how can she know? and he such a handsome, engaging young man)! No, no! not she!

Not a word does she say to Beatrice. 'She never interferes;' forsooth! 'Her niece is old enough to take care of herself;' but she will gossip for an hour on end about it, with a woman who she knows is just delighted to lay hold of anything unkind to say of anybody, particularly a pretty young girl. I declare it makes me more angry than I can express! And to say it before Walter too! Not but what he was as angry as I was."

"Walter is too much of a gentleman not to be angry at such ill-nature," said Mrs. Sem-pill indignantly. "And that sweet innocent girl! And what is Miss Winter there for, I wonder? Oh fie! and Arthur Bertram is as fine a lad as ever was, too; but if these creatures had had any wise-like female friend to take charge of them, these foolish little liberties, never would have been permitted. The fault does not lie at their door."

All unconscious of Miss Menie Mark's comments on Arthur Bertram's mode of paying visits, Beatrice, the while, was lost in dreams of the happiness awaiting her on the night of the ball, in being a whole evening in his company. The very day before the ball, to her great surprise she received a note from

Emily Bertram, informing her of the arrival of her eldest brother, about a week sooner than they had expected him. "He looks very pale and thin," wrote she; "and is weak, and a good deal exhausted by his journey. Of course he will not be able to join our party to-morrow evening; but I think when you see him that you will be agreeably surprised by his appearance. I certainly am, after the sad change in it which I had anticipated. His arrival has made me so happy, that I look forward with added eagerness to the ball. I do hope it may go off well."

Emily was not solitary in her hopes. Many a heart beat with expectation as the eventful night approached. And when it had at last arrived, and after submitting themselves to the kind and skilful hands of Jessy Christie, our two young sisters descended to the parlour in their simple but elegant white dresses, their only ornaments a few camellias tastefully wreathed in their dark hair, it would be difficult to exaggerate the amount of bright hope, mingled though it was with timid fear, which animated both their spirits. Miss Grace, in a blue satin dress, and blue gauze head-piece, bedecked with flowers, was awaiting her nieces;

and after she had bestowed upon their appearance a few animated comments, which outweighed the cold silence of their grandmother and Miss Willie, she hurried them to the carriage, and in a few minutes they were on their way to Kingsconnell.

CHAPTER VI.

“ You are welcome, gentlemen ! I have seen the day
That I have worn a visor, and could tell
A whispering tale in a fair lady’s ear,
Such as would please ;—’tis gone,—’tis gone,—’tis gone !
You are welcome, gentlemen ! Come, musicians, play !
A hall ! a hall ! give room, and foot it, girls ! ”

ROMEO AND JULIET.

It was a brilliant scene which met the party as they entered the avenue leading to Kingsconnell, which was lighted along its whole extent with lamps hung between the stately trees ; and up whose broad straight course more than one vehicle was already wending its way towards the mansion, the whole of whose front was a blaze of light. The lofty iron railings were festooned with lamps ; and a covered way had been erected from the gates to the door-steps beneath the portico, which temporary passage was brilliantly lighted and

lined on either side with green-house plants. The hall and staircase were profusely decorated in the same way; and as, amongst other new arrivals, Beatrice and Helen entered it with their aunt, the effect was so overpowering to their inexperienced eyes, combined as it was with the crowd of servants, the sound of the guests' names echoed from one to another, and the confused murmur of voices overhead, that they instinctively drew closer to her, and felt as if they never should have courage to ascend the stairs. The relief was inexpressible to them, and perhaps not much less so to Miss Grace, when the foremost of a group of newly-arrived gentlemen, advancing towards them, accosted the latter, and in so doing, disclosed the kind and familiar countenance of Captain Sempill.

"Well met, Miss Grace! The boys and I, and our friend Mr. Maxwell," indicating a gentleman known to the Miss Lockharts as a frequent guest at Sempilltower, "have just been looking for you. Miss Grace, will you take my arm? Miss Beatrice, do me the honour to accept the other. Mr. Maxwell, you will take care of Miss Helen Lockhart."

Walter and Philip exchanged glances of

infinite disgust, as the quiet and by-no-means juvenile Mr. Maxwell assumed the office thus delegated to him, and composedly tucked the lovely young Helen under his arm. "But at all events," thought Walter, as he followed in their wake, "she's engaged to dance the first dance with me."

They ascended the stairs; and from the hall above, the long vista of illuminated apartments met their view. In the first drawing-room of the suite, stood a group not unworthy of their splendid dwelling, to receive their guests. Lady Bertram, her mature, but not faded charms, displayed to the utmost advantage by her rich dress, and magnificent profusion of diamonds; Sir Thomas, tall, erect, and stately, his demeanour marked by the most polished courtesy;—their daughter, her elegant form attired in a simple, but costly dress of lace over white satin, her dark hair wreathed with pearls, her brilliant eyes beaming, and her fine features glowing with pleasure too *young* and natural not to be beautiful. Near them was Arthur, in face, in form, in air, the very perfection of manly beauty and grace; and Hugh, a slender lad, with all the graceful length and elasticity of limb which distinguished the family, but

otherwise less striking in personal appearance than either of his brothers. Many an eye rested with admiration, some even with feelings akin to envy, on the parents and children, thus basking in the very sun-light, as it seemed, of prosperity, with all that the world could afford of best and fairest, at their very feet.

The rooms, meanwhile, were rapidly filling with company, all the *élite* of the large county, and many strangers, some of high rank; and shortly after the entrance of Miss Grace Lockhart and her nieces, the band, which was one procured from Edinburgh, and for which a temporary gallery had been erected in the great drawing-room, struck up a country-dance; to the head of which Arthur Bertram, in the absence of his elder brother, led a young lady, the eldest daughter of a nobleman whose seat lay some miles from Kingsconnell. Beatrice, between whom and himself a greeting, of few words, but looks of expressive meaning, had passed, joined this dance with one of the young men who were visitors in the house,—introduced to her at his own request by Sir Thomas; and Helen's willing hand was claimed by Walter Sempill. The music rang along the roof, the dancers' springing footsteps re-

sponded to the sound, and all was gaiety and animation. It was a scene where everything that is young and happy looks almost beautiful; and there was, besides, amongst the assembled guests, a considerable proportion of very attractive looks, and some undeniable beauty. Of the latter quality the palm was variously adjudged by the spectators, some pronouncing that there was no young lady in the room to be compared to Miss Bertram, others deciding in favour of the superior attractions of Helen Lockhart; whilst Beatrice, although much less regularly beautiful than either Emily or her sister, had something in her appearance so bright, so full of expression, the constant variations of her colour were so exquisite, and the nameless charm of mingled intellect and feeling lent such interest to her countenance, that even those who at first sight had not seen much in her to admire, recurred again and again to her face, with still increasing delight, and ended by pronouncing her lovely.

"Really, Miss Grace," said Captain Sempill, who, finding that lady somewhat solitary on a bench, kindly offered her his arm, and invited her to walk through the rooms with him, "really, you have much reason to be proud of your nieces."

"I am delighted to hear you say so, Captain Sempill," replied Miss Grace in a flutter of satisfaction. "Oh! *my* saying so is nothing," returned he. "You know *my* sentiments on the subject long ago. But everybody says the same thing. Everybody in the room is admiring them. A dozen people have asked me who they were; and so many young men have been pressing for introductions to them, that my nephew Wat. is quite jealous, and as savage as a bear at losing Helen so often. I see he has managed to get hold of her again, however. Look there, Miss Grace. Is not that a pretty picture?"

He directed her attention to the opposite side of the room, where Helen had at that moment placed herself in a window, while Walter stood by her side. It was indeed a lovely picture. The window had been opened to admit fresh air into the heated ball-room; and the rich crimson satin window-curtain, partially drawn up, hung with its deep and massive folds just behind her seat, forming a glowing back-ground, on which were relieved her simple white dress, the soft redundant masses of her dark brown hair, and the white camellias which were entwined in it. She sat, her head thrown a little back, looking up at

her partner, who was standing more in the shadow of the deep old-fashioned window, with one arm resting on the frame, and bending down to talk to her. Her large dark eyes were turned to him, filled with that sunny light which we never see save in those of early and unsullied youth; and her lips, the deep-red lips of girlhood, with their delicate curve a little apart, seemed drinking in every word he uttered. There was an air of innocence and purity diffused over the whole countenance of Helen Lockhart, and a depth of tender softness in her eyes, with their long, black curling lashes, which formed one of the most irresistible adjuncts to her beauty; and its very childishness and unformed character added to this charm. Very happy did she look, innocently absorbed in the enjoyment of the hour and the companion who shared it with her; happier even than she knew. And very happy, and very deeply enamoured, looked the young Walter. They had eyes and ears for nobody beyond each other; and so it fell out; for even while Captain Sempill and Miss Grace stood gazing on them, a most unwelcome interruption occurred to their conversation. This was no other than the approach of Mr. Maxwell, who,

arm-in-arm with a tall stout young man, appeared in nautical phrase, "bearing down" upon the unconscious pair. All unaware of their approach, Walter had no time, by a fresh application for Helen's hand, to avert the impending calamity, which was heralded by the ominous words, "Miss Helen Lockhart, allow me to introduce Sir John Cochrane."

"Oh! what an ass I was, not to engage her again!" groaned poor Walter-in spirit, as Helen, who had not yet attained a sufficient degree of ease or assurance to decline dancing, for the evident purpose of sitting still to talk with some one more favoured than the applicant, was forced to smile and bow, and rise to join the next quadrille. Dearly as she loved dancing, it was not to be questioned that she would rather have remained sitting just then, but there was no remedy.

Somewhat consoled by having contrived to whisper a request for Helen's hand in the dance which would succeed this, and having secured her assent, yet sorely troubled by the interruption to so delightful a *tête-à-tête*, Walter sauntered across the ball-room in time to hear his enemy, Mr. Maxwell, exultingly whisper to Miss Grace,—

"Just introduced Sir John Cochrane to your niece, Miss Lockhart!—bachelor,—fine property! Might have found her many more amusing partners, but this one will tell well in history!"

"Plague take you for a meddling old block-head!" inwardly ejaculated Walter, with more sincerity than elegance, as he turned moodily away, and ensconced himself in a corner to await Helen's release.

"Beatrice," said Emily Bertram to her friend, as she sat down beside her at the close of this dance, "you are not engaged again just now, are you? No! I am glad of that; for Arthur is looking for you."

Beatrice heard this with a throbbing heart, and a sudden rush of bright colour to her cheek. She had as yet only danced once with Arthur, so great were the demands upon him for universal attention; and although quite aware that it must be so in a ball at his own house, she had felt something like a shade of disappointment cross her mind, at seeing so little of him.

Now, however, he was at her side again; and Emily, saying that she must look for her mother, arose and left her seat for him. There

was at this moment a brief pause in the dancing, while refreshment-trays were making a circuit of the rooms.

"Miss Lockhart," said Arthur, after he had brought Beatrice an ice, "might I venture to ask you a great favour?"

"Certainly, Mr. Bertram," replied Beatrice. "Anything I can do."

"My brother," pursued Arthur, "is very anxious to see you. He is still up in his sitting-room, for being one of those people who turn day into night, he cannot sleep early, even now, and seldom retires before twelve. Should you have any objection to paying him a short visit? he would feel it quite a kindness?"

"I shall be delighted to go," said Beatrice, blushing very deeply. "How can you talk of it as a kindness?"

"He will so consider it, I assure you," returned Arthur, "Aunt Margaret, whom you must recollect, though it is three years since she has been here, is sitting with him, and will be charmed to see you. Shall we go down then?"

Beatrice rose, and took his offered arm, just as another dance began. They threaded

the mazes of the crowd, making their way, not towards the grand staircase, but to one which opened by a turret-door into the library, and by which access was given to that side of the house where William Bertram's apartments were. The library, which had been appropriated as a place to rest and walk about in, was empty when they entered it; and its silence, quiet, and coolness, with the comparatively dim light of its shaded lamps, presented a soothing contrast to the glare and heat of the ball-room. They paused, by mutual consent, in crossing it.

"You will perceive a sad alteration in my brother's appearance, Miss Lockhart," said Arthur.

"I am grieved to hear it," replied Beatrice.
"But he is much better, is he not?"

"He says so," replied Arthur; "and he must be so, certainly, or else he could not have stood the fatigues of travelling as he has done. But he is so changed, his spirits so much depressed."

"Is he then uneasy about his own health?" asked Beatrice.

"Oh! no, by no means. William has not, and never had, a thought connected with self.

Uneasy is not the word. But there are,—there have been,—circumstances. It is too long and sad a story for a ball-room, Miss Lockhart. Some day I shall tell it you. William will not object. He has the greatest, the highest possible opinion——You know our family-history, don't you?" abruptly added Arthur, after a pause.

"I have heard Mr. Carmichael——," hesitated Beatrice.

"Yes, I should imagine so. It has always dwelt on William's mind, I find. Not on mine, though I knew it too. Scarce at all till lately. Last night, he and I were discussing it; not the best possible preparation for a ball, was it?"

"But," said Beatrice,—“it is one of those dim and shadowy things that fade into the back-ground of memory, amidst the bustle of life. I daresay you have never recollected it all night, till this moment.”

"Perhaps not," replied Arthur, "but just now it rushed upon me so vividly! You know this picture, don't you?" He drew her towards that of the Master of Kingsconnell.

"Well do I know it!" exclaimed Beatrice, striving to suppress a shudder.

"And the first time you and I met," pursued he, "do you recollect it? In this room——"

"I thought it had walked out of its frame?" said Beatrice, endeavouring to smile.

"Will the resemblance ever extend farther?" exclaimed Arthur in a low voice, and as if half in soliloquy. "Why should such thoughts come across one in such a scene as this?" They stood together for a minute or more in silence, gazing at the picture. Then suddenly recovering himself—"Come, Miss Lockhart," he said,—"I did not bring you here to listen to these visions. I don't know what has possessed me. Let us go down to my brother."

They went out at the turret-door, and descended the winding stair. The contrast between the din, and heat, and excitement, pervading the upper part of the mansion, and the stillness, the total silence, of these lower regions on this side, was amazing. It was like entering into a different world. Proceeding through a long passage, which ran round the basement-floor of the house, they turned off from it into another and narrower one, at the extremity of which was the door of William Bertram's

sitting-room. At this Arthur gently tapped, then opened it.

"My dear aunt," he said, "Miss Lockhart has been so kind as to come down to pay you and William a visit."

An old lady, the aunt of Sir Thomas Bertram, of the most graceful presence and winning benevolence of countenance, came round the Indian screen which was placed against the door, and cordially and affectionately welcoming her young visitor, led her forward to the fire-place, where William was reclining on a couch; from which he started at the approach of Beatrice, with an expression of the liveliest pleasure.

"My dear Miss Lockhart!" he exclaimed, clasping her extended hand in his, "how very kind! how rejoiced I am to see you!"

Beatrice seated herself in silence on a low chair by his side, while Arthur remained leaning against the mantel-piece close by her. The eyes of Miss Margaret Bertram rested mournfully on the group; for she felt that the contrast between the aspect of the two brothers had never struck her so forcibly as at that moment. Arthur, in the very glow and pride of health and beauty, his dark eyes beaming

with the light of unbroken youth,—every turn, every movement of his tall, light, graceful form denoting the perfection of manly vigour. William, extended on his couch in an attitude so plainly bespeaking the lassitude of ill health, the symmetry of his figure remaining, but all its elasticity of motion gone; and the expression of his countenance so altered!—not for the worse;—on the contrary, there were a calm, a repose, a spirituality diffused over it, an added degree of melancholy sweetness in his smile, and in the languor of his eyes, which were even painfully beautiful, because unlike this world, unlike the look of those destined to live and take an active part in its on-goings. Something there was even in his white attenuated hands, to whose peculiar grace we have before alluded, which conveyed an irresistible impression of repose too deep for life. And between the brothers sat that young and lovely girl, on whom the gaze of the younger was intently fixed, while her's was bent upon the countenance of the elder, noting, with an interest so strong as to overpower her timidity, the alteration there since she had seen him last.

“I am very sorry,” she said in a gentle voice, “to hear how ill you have been.”

"Thank you," he replied. "You are very kind! But I am much better; I feel stronger, even since I returned home. I should have enjoyed seeing you all to-night, if I could have been invisible! but I did not feel equal to encountering the heat and crowd. And my kind aunt, after showing herself for a little while above-stairs, came down to bear me company."

"I had the pleasure, Miss Lockhart, of seeing you and your sister dancing, amongst many others," said the old lady with a benevolent smile. "It did me all the good in the world to see so many young happy faces. It was really kind of you to leave such a merry scene to come to this quiet room."

"It was indeed," added William. "We have not thanked you sufficiently for it."

Beatrice blushingly disclaimed their thanks; and Arthur, breaking the silence in which he had stood since his entrance to the room, requested permission to leave her there, and return to escort her back to the ball-room in a little time, as he felt that his presence there could not be dispensed with. To this she willingly assented, and he left them together.

"Arthur has a double share of duty to-

night," said William. "All that belongs to him, and all that should have been mine. The time has been——"

"And will be again, my dear boy, please God!" interposed Miss Bertram, looking up from her knitting. "Do not give way to despondency. Only anything like delicate health is so completely new to you."

"I remember hearing you say, Mr. Bertram," observed Beatrice,—“a year or two ago, that you never had been ill in your life. How irksome you must have felt illness to be!”

"Perhaps I said that too boastfully," said William smiling. "But the change came gradually; and custom will reconcile us to anything, in measure. Now it seems to me a strange thing to look back upon the feelings of perfect health and strength. If *that* were all——" he added these last words in a low voice; then looking up, met the eyes of Beatrice fixed upon him, with a sad enquiring look. "You do not yet," he said, "know the full signification of these words, which are so constantly present with me—

".....learn to quit with eye serene
Thy youth's ideal heard.

“ ‘Thy treasured hopes and raptures high—
Unmurmuring let them go,
Nor grieve the bliss should quickly fly
Which Christ disdained to know.’

‘*Unmurmuring* let them go!’ There is the difficulty. Do you know that book, Miss Lockhart, or shall I be the happy means of first making you acquainted with it?”

“I do know it,” answered Beatrice, the colour rushing to her cheek. “Your brother——”

“Ah! I might have guessed as much. Nothing that is fine in poetry escapes Arthur; but perhaps neither you nor he, are yet aware of its full value. It is a dear companion of mine.” He laid his hand as he spoke on a copy of the “Christian Year,” which, amongst many other books, stood on a small table on the other side of his sofa. “Now tell me about your reading, Miss Lockhart. Last year when I was at home, we used to have some colloquies on that subject which I have not forgotten. Have you had much assistance from Carmichael of late?”

Their conversation, thus directed, assumed a calmer and less exciting tone; but one so delightful to Beatrice, who had always felt a charm in William Bertram’s society only second

to that of his brother's, though of a totally different character, that she almost experienced a sensation of regret when Arthur again appeared, and claimed her presence in the ball and her hand for the next dance.

"Good night, dear Miss Lockhart!" said William, as she rose to depart. "If you will not let me thank you for your kind visit, permit me at least to hope that it may soon be repeated, for it has been a great pleasure to me to see you once more."

He raised her hand as he spoke, and pressed it to his lips. "Good night, my dear, and much happiness!" added Aunt Margaret, and the door closed behind the youthful lovers.

"You are very tired, my dear William," said the old lady, returning to the side of her nephew, who lay back on the sofa-pillows, his hand covering his eyes. "It is very late, and I fear you have exhausted yourself by talking. Let me ring for Henderson."

"Thank you, Aunt Margaret, if you will be so good," replied her nephew. "No—I am not at all exhausted by talking, I assure you. The sight of that charming girl is quite a refreshment to me; but it brings me many—many thoughts—many reminiscences.— Is

she not a sweet creature?" he added after a brief pause.

"As sweet a creature as I ever saw!" replied Miss Bertram. "And so Arthur seems to think."

"Yes," said William. "He thinks so now, and has thought so for long. But his ordeal has hardly begun yet. Pray God she may be his safeguard!"

"And so you do not think my brother so painfully altered as you expected?" asked Arthur of Beatrice as they again entered the library, and again found it empty.

"No, indeed, I do not," she replied. "As to *painful*, I cannot connect any thought of pain with him. The expression of his face is——"

"Only a little lower than the angels. I know that," said Arthur.

" 'Thou wert too like a dream of Heaven
For earthly love to merit thee!'"

"But I did not mean you to draw that inference from what I said," replied Beatrice, looking up in his saddened countenance with eyes full of sympathetic tears. "Indeed I do think him looking a great deal better, and con-

versing more cheerfully than I expected. Try to have better hopes."

"Thank you, thank you!" he earnestly replied. "I am perhaps more anxious than I need be about William, for I feel so intensely all that I should lose in him. He is my better angel; I should be undone without him."

At that moment the door from the ball-room opened, and admitted a gay throng, in search of coolness after the dance which had just concluded. Beatrice and Arthur mingled with them, and encountered Helen, looking once more the happiest of the happy, and leaning on the arm of Walter Sempill. Then, the music beginning to sound once more, they bent their steps in pursuit of a *vis-à-vis* for the next quadrille.

A splendid supper, in due course of time, served in the dining-room, lent added zest to the enjoyments of the evening and increased liveliness to the dances which succeeded it. It was not until a very late hour that the party showed symptoms of dispersing; but at last the rooms began to thin perceptibly. Miss Grace Lockhart and Captain Sempill had respectively issued a warning note to their young companions; but were now besieged by Arthur

Bertram on one side, and Walter on the other, so eagerly imploring grace for one more dance, that they found themselves, however sleepy, compelled to yield ; and to sit watching those young and agile forms, as untiringly responding to the music as if they had been only now beginning, instead of closing, the evening.

At last however, all was fairly over. The time-honoured conclusion to every festive meeting in Scotland, "Gude nicht and joy be wi' ye a'," had not been omitted ; and its last notes, bearing in their sweetness a mournful character, that of the gentle melancholy which must ever attend the departure of pleasure, were dying away from the musicians' gallery, as Beatrice found herself on the steps in front of the mansion, following her aunt and Captain Sempill, and leaning on Arthur's arm ;—themselves in turn followed by Helen and Walter. The lamps in front of the iron railings contrasted strangely with the light of advancing morning ; and the whole scene viewed in that unaccustomed light, had a dreamy character to the eye. The Grange carriage was not yet come up, and they lingered a few minutes in the covered way leading to the gate, their hearts full of more thoughts than their lips

gave utterance to. At last the couple in advance began to move.

"Good night!" said Arthur. "Good night, Miss Lockhart." His hand lingered long in the earnest pressure of her's which accompanied the words; then she ascended the carriage, and Helen followed, her fingers tingling from the grasp of Walter's.

"Oh Beatrice!" she exclaimed as they drove off, "what a happy, happy evening! What a beautiful ball!"

"Beautiful!" was the fervent reply of Beatrice. "You have been very happy, darling, have you not?"

"Happy! oh Beatrice! I never, never in my life was so perfectly happy. Weren't you?"

"Poor things!" ejaculated Miss Grace. "Mr. Arthur Bertram and Walter Sempill were very happy too, I daresay. I'm so glad you enjoyed yourselves, and looked nice and *like* yourselves." And in a full flow of enchanting reminiscences on Helen's part, and of more silent musing on that of Beatrice, accompanied by various commentaries of a similar nature to the above from their aunt, the party reached the Grange.

CHAPTER VII.

"O soothe us, haunt us, night and day,
Ye gentle spirits far away,
With whom we shared the cup of grace,
Then parted—ye to Christ's embrace—
We to the lonesome world again,
Yet mindful of the unearthly strain,
Practised with you at Eden's door,
To be sung on, where angels soar,
With blended voices evermore."

CHRISTIAN YEAR.

It was nearly five o'clock, on a lovely afternoon, about a week after the ball. Dinner was over at the Grange, and the parlour redolent of hotch-potch, and other savoury messes. The old lady had composed herself to sleep in her easy-chair; Miss Willie had gone upstairs to dress for a *soirée* at Miss Babie Chisholm's, whither she was to be accompanied by Miss Winter, who was about to retire for a similar purpose of adornment. Miss Grace, who remained at home, ostensibly for the sake

of making tea for her mother, and really in order that the two girls might not be compelled to hurry back from a walk, which she guessed that they meditated, to fulfil that duty in her absence—felt amply recompensed for her good-natured self-denial, in the prospect of two hours' uninterrupted enjoyment of a new novel; and in order to secure the largest possible amount of this, had nixed herself in the western window, one chair supporting her person, and another her feet; and the declining sun pouring a warm flood of radiance over her.

"Helen," said Beatrice; "let us go and take a walk. It is such a lovely evening."

"Remember, Miss Helen," subjoined Miss Winter, turning round as she was about to leave the room, "that you have still half an hour's practising to do."

"Yes, Miss Winter," replied Helen; "I shall not forget it; but it will be time enough after I come in."

"See that it be so, Helen," solemnly responded her governess, departing as she spoke.

"There's no hurry home, you know, my dears," said Miss Grace, whispering low and confidentially, as the sisters left the room. "I'll keep tea for you."

"Thank you, Aunt Grace, you are always so kind," exclaimed Beatrice. "Come, Helen, we shall have a charming walk."

The wood-walks, with their canopies of fragrant honeysuckle, never had looked or felt more delicious than they now did, as the sisters threaded their mazes, towards the banks of the Connell Water; the sun had never shed a lovelier golden green athwart the rich and varied foliage, or the little river seemed to dance more musically over its rocky bed. It was a glorious August evening, and all its light appeared reflected in the eyes of Beatrice, as from the path by the river side, which she and Helen were pursuing, they suddenly heard a gun fired off on the opposite bank; which sound was followed by the apparition of Arthur Bertram from amongst the trees.

He came forward to the steep bank which descended to the water, gazed eagerly up and down, and caught sight of the sisters. They had apparently been the objects of his search; for he no sooner descried them, than, still carrying his gun, whose weight in no way impeded his agile movements, he sprang at one bound to the water's edge, and cleared it in several vigorous steps by means of some rough stones

which stood above the stream. Another bound placed him in the path before them, glowing alike with exercise and happiness. There was a blushing exchange of greetings; and then Arthur, as a matter of course, turned with them, and walked along by Beatrice's side. This was the second time since the ball that they had met almost in the same spot; first, by accident, about the same hour, two days before; this time, by the species of tacit understanding which guides the steps of lovers, and which had brought Arthur home on some pretext from the moors, a couple of hours before the companions of his sport. They now wandered slowly on, entranced as usual in each other's conversation; their hearts, if human hearts ever were so, in unison with the full loveliness of the scene and the hour; till at last they reached a well-remembered seat which overhung the water, and there placed themselves to rest, or rather to talk more uninterruptedly. Helen, the while, amused herself by rambling about in search of honeysuckle and other late wild flowers, now near, and now farther off from them. Their conversation, after touching upon various topics, soon turned upon one deeply interesting to both.

"I am so glad, Mr. Bertram," said Beatrice, "that you really do begin to feel less anxious about your brother."

"Thank you," he replied; "I hope I have reason to be so. Every one but myself seems almost to have dismissed anxiety respecting his ultimate recovery; but mine is only lulled for the present. I know more than the rest, of the cause of his illness, that is, not the original cause—which was manifest enough, but that of its second recurrence. Do you know, Miss Lockhart, the reason why *you* so particularly interest my brother? I do not mean, of course, that it is the only reason—very far otherwise, as you must be aware. But he is much struck by your remarkable resemblance to a young lady who, had she lived, would have been his wife."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Beatrice. "And she is dead? Oh, how very, very sad! how I feel for him. Will you tell me the story, Mr. Bertram?"

"I will," he answered; "I have been longing to tell it you. You have often heard of the accident, which has had such disastrous consequences, and which he met with the winter before last, in rescuing an English

gentleman and his young son from shipwreck."

"Mr. Sidney," said Beatrice. "That was the name, was it not? Yes, certainly. It is not a story to be forgotten."

"Nor ever will be," added Arthur. "It was in Mr. Sidney's house at Castel-a-Mare, that he resided for some time after; and where, some weeks subsequently to the accident, after having neglected many symptoms of illness, he was seized with the first alarming attack. The family consisted of Mr. Sidney himself, who is an English country gentleman of very moderate fortune, his wife, two daughters, and two sons. Only the eldest son and daughter were grown up, and it was on account of this son's health they had come abroad. My brother, to his surprise, recognised in him a Cambridge man about his own standing, but not of the same college. They had met, however, and were slightly acquainted. Young Sidney had taken honours, and read very hard."

"Too hard, I suppose," said Beatrice; "how many do!"

"Very possibly," replied Arthur. "And he had just gone into Holy Orders, when his health began to give way. It seems they had

lost one daughter in consumption, between him and the sister, Violet, who was only nineteen at that time; and they took fright, and resolved to accompany him to Italy, when he was ordered there."

"And he died?" asked Beatrice.

"He died. He was dying when William came to the house, but not confined to his room; suffering little or no pain, and full, at times, of energy and animation, as I believe is often the case in consumption; always cheerful, and able for more exertion in that delightful climate than he could have been elsewhere. His mother would not believe that he was dying. She thought it impossible; but he himself told my brother so, almost from the first day they met."

"And he did not express any despondency in the idea?"

"Quite — quite otherwise. He grieved deeply for his family, for William says they were all so fondly attached to each other! But for himself he was more than resigned, perfectly happy. I cannot understand that. I cleave to life, with all its warmth, and love, and joy. The idea of an early death is to me a very hideous one."

"There is much in youth to render us unwilling to die," said Beatrice. "But think, Mr. Bertram, of all the sorrows of life which we escape by early death! And think how early death embalms our memory! To me it seems more dreadful to anticipate outliving all who loved me, or would have lamented me."

"But give me *living* love," exclaimed Arthur. "Give me the bounding pulse of life and youth! I should not feel the love that was lavished on my grave. You look reproachfully at me, Miss Lockhart! You think me of 'the earth,—the dear green earth!' and so I fear I am. I love life with all its varieties. To me it is an awful thought—'to die, and go we know not where.'"

"This dying man *did* know where, and therefore he could be happy in resigning life," said Beatrice in a timid, but earnest voice. "But pray go on, Mr. Bertram."

And Arthur proceeded with his narrative, which we shall give more connectedly in our own words. The heroic rescue of Mr. Sidney and his younger son, achieved by William Bertram, had at once opened the hearts of the whole family to him, even before his own singularly attaching qualities had had time to do so; and

he was pressed to make their temporary abode his home, for as long a period as suited him, with an affectionate importunity which it was impossible to resist. Nor had he much inclination to resist it. There was something inexpressibly interesting and attractive in the family circle with whom he thus found himself domesticated ; something refined, elegant, and unworldly, to which he had not been accustomed, and to whose refreshing and elevating influence his whole heart expanded. Mr. Sidney was himself an admirable specimen of the high-minded and accomplished English gentleman ; and his wife a gentle, amiable, and intellectual woman ; both devoted to their children, yet free from the weakness and egotism which so often mingle with, and so woefully alloy, the tenderness of parents. They had evidently lived for them, without forgetting that they had duties to discharge towards others besides their offspring ; and affections not meant to be concentrated on them. And the circumstances under which William Bertram first made their acquaintance ; the painful alternations of hope and fear, which faith in God alone could render endurable, with which both parents, even the mother who would not

confess her alarm, watched the fluctuating health of their beloved and gifted son, made them doubly interesting to a heart so open to every gentle and tender feeling.

But it was his knowledge of Henry Sidney to which William now recurred with the deepest thankfulness. The intimacy between them speedily ripened into the warmest friendship; cemented by the many hours which Sidney, himself at that time looking the least like a dying man of the two, devoted to cheering by his society the tedious period of William's convalescence. Every shade of reserve melted away between them; and with reserve, the shades of doubt and infidelity rolled from the spirit which had so long, and yet so vainly, striven after the light. Here was a man, a young man like himself,—highly endowed by nature, and more richly still by profound study, above all of those very subjects which had so long perplexed and harassed his own mind; no sour or gloomy fanatic, ignorant of the world whose allurements he affected to condemn, and dealing judgment on all who differed with himself, from the heights of an unapproachable and impregnable spiritual pride and self-righteousness; but on the contrary, one graced with

all the accomplishments which adorn society, with a heart open to all its rational delights,—an eye and taste cultivated by all that is most refining in nature and in art,—yet withal a devout and humble-minded believer, a loyal-hearted son and minister of the Church of England. And here, above all, was a man whose pure, holy, self-denying life, and whose perfect peace in the prospect of an early death, bore the most convincing of all testimonies to the reality of his faith. Blessed indeed did William learn to acknowledge the accident to be, which had brought him into contact with such a mind; and which under such guidance had been the means of leading him, in penitence and humiliation for his past sin, to the foot of the Cross.

His love for Violet Sidney had grown naturally, at first almost unconsciously, out of his friendship for her brother, whose constant companion she was. There was, as he had said to Arthur, much both in her person and her character which recalled Beatrice Lockhart;—more perhaps in Beatrice which recalled her, now that he saw the former once more. A creature full of talent, full of feeling, with all the high and fervid impulses of genius, yet all controlled

and regulated by her calm and holy faith, Violet was what poor Beatrice might have been, under similar happy auspices with those amidst which she had lived all her life. The influences surrounding her had early ripened for immortality a spirit destined to so brief a sojourn here; and rendered her what the discipline of a longer pilgrimage, a path of toil and tears, was needed to make the other. Soon, very soon, William Bertram loved her with his whole heart, and found his love returned. The period of their actual intimacy, though short in point of time, comprised the experience of years in the manner in which it united them, and unveiled their highest and finest feelings to each other; and before William Bertram quitted Mr. Sidney's house, they were, with the approbation of her parents, engaged to each other. The state of her brother's health, however, not less than the condition exacted by Mr. Sidney, that their union should not take place unless by the full consent of Sir Thomas Bertram, rendered their engagement a completely private one. Knowing his father's ambitious views, William resolved to leave nothing to the doubtful chance of letters, but to travel homewards, as soon as his strength per-

mitted, and exert his personal influence with him on a subject which involved the happiness of his life. But many weeks elapsed, ere he was able to carry this resolution into effect ; and while bodily weakness, and oft-recurring symptoms of illness, detained him in the residence he had chosen near Mr. Sidney's, he enjoyed the happiness of constant intercourse with Violet and her brother ; hours of peaceful communion on which he now looked back as the most blessed of his whole existence. Contrary to his own expectations, the life of Henry Sidney had been prolonged through the winter ; and when, in spring, his friend at last took leave of him ere departing home, it was with something like hope that they might be permitted to meet again ; a hope not encouraged, however, by the affectionate solemnity of Henry's farewell. Violet and her mother, on the contrary, were more sanguine respecting his recovery than they had ever yet appeared. They parted. William tore himself from that abode of love and peace, and from the presence of her whom every hour had rendered more and more dear to him ; and within a fortnight after his departure, Henry Sidney died !

The reader is already acquainted with the

history of William's return home, and will scarce require to be told that Sir Thomas had at first positively refused his consent to a marriage for his son, so disappointing to his ambitious hopes; or that Lady Bertram more than seconded the disapprobation of it, expressed by her husband. Nothing, in short, but the conviction forcing itself upon their minds, when sent for in consequence of his illness at Kingsconnell, that their son's life, shaken as his fine constitution had been, depended upon their decision, would have wrung from either the reluctant consent which had sent him back the previous autumn to Italy, with hopes revived, only to meet still more bitter and lasting disappointment.

To Italy he returned; for Mr. Sidney's family had been unable to leave it. After moving northwards during the summer, the approach of winter had again compelled them to seek the shores of the Bay of Naples, which were destined to witness the decay of their household's best and brightest flower. The seeds of consumption had too probably been sown by the fatal imprudence of permitting Violet's constant attendance on her brother; but beyond question, the long period of bitter

suspense she had endured since her lover's departure, and the threatened blight of her heart's first innocent affection, acting upon a frame already enfeebled by sorrow, had rapidly developed the evil. William Bertram found her more lovely than ever, more than ever alive to all the influences of life and love, but in a state of health which must have awakened the most agonizing apprehensions in any heart, save one which refused, like his, to admit conviction of her danger. The joy of seeing him again, the revival of all her hopes of happiness, effected for a short time a change so favourable, that even her parents were deceived. But this did not long continue. During the short remainder of her life her lover never left her again. All that the most devoted tenderness could do to smooth her passage to the grave, was lavished upon her; and she often told him that God in His infinite mercy was removing her from earth to spare her the pain of living to discover that such perfect happiness could not last below. For weeks previous to her death, her holy and child-like submission to the will of God, her perfect resignation,—had under the Divine blessing, calmed the first anguish and despair with which the certainty of her inevitable

doom had broken on his mind ; and under the sanctifying influences of her death-bed he too learned to take up the cross laid upon him.

"She expired in his arms," said Arthur, while Beatrice wept unrestrainedly, "in the most perfect peace. You know the rest. His distress and suffering were soon after followed by that frightful recurrence of illness. He has told me since he returned, that he then *hoped* he was dying. And even I can feel in a case like his, that to *live*, not to die, is what calls for most resignation."

"No doubt of it—no doubt !" exclaimed Beatrice, struggling to repress her sobs. "What had he left to live for?"

"He says, and I am sure feels," replied Arthur, "that he has many duties left to live for. But ——. I have given you a great deal of pain, I fear, Miss Lockhart?" he added, interrupting himself.

"It is pain that does one good," answered Beatrice, "and I would not have escaped it ; believe me, I am grateful to you for telling me the story."

"I have told it to no one else," said Arthur ; "I believe few, even of our own family, know or suspect anything of it. There was

no occasion why they should. I was about to add, a minute ago, that my knowledge of all these circumstances, and my intimate acquaintance with my brother's mind, and all its capacity of quiet, profound feeling, are what render me so desponding, at times, on his account. There are some things in this world that man does *not* 'grieve down.'"

"And yet they say," returned Beatrice, "that people do not die of grief."

"Of grief alone, no—probably not. But in a case like William's, where the original strength of constitution that he possessed has been so cruelly impaired, the influence of a deep heart-sorrow in wearing out the springs of life, must be so greatly augmented. Did you observe," he added, after a pause, "a copy of the 'Christian Year,' on the table in my brother's room?"

"I did," replied Beatrice. "Your brother loves that book dearly, I see, Mr. Bertram."

"It never leaves his side," replied Arthur. "Violet gave it to him on her death-bed—returned it to him—for he had brought it out to her from England. It was one of the books which she liked best to have him read to her ;

and there are many passages in it, marked in pencil by her hand."

"What an angel she must have been!" ejaculated Beatrice.

"Mr. Bertram," said Helen, approaching with a smile, a few minutes after this, "do you mean to go home to dinner? For I suspect it is getting very late."

"Thank you," replied Arthur; "I certainly have not dined; but our dinner-hour is very late just now, often not till half-past eight. I had forgotten all about it."

"And I about tea," exclaimed Beatrice, in dismay.

"Oh, but Aunt Grace won't mind," said Helen.

"And it is not eight o'clock yet," added Arthur, looking at his watch as they began to move. "It is quite as near for me, Miss Lockhart, to go home by the wooden bridge. Let me escort you so far. Are you going to hear Carmichael's celebrated friend preach, on Thursday next?"

"What friend? I never heard of it," exclaimed Beatrice.

"Oh, yes, Beatrice; at least I did," said Helen; "and I forgot to tell you. Walter

Sempill told me yesterday, when we dined at Sempilltower. It is the famous Edward Irving, the great London preacher. He is coming to pay a visit to Dr. Pearson at St. Michael's."

"And you know, don't you," added Arthur, "that Carmichael is excessively anxious to have a monument erected on the spot, where they were killed, to the memory of the four Covenanters, whose graves are pointed out in that beautiful glen, the Hunter's Hope, as it is called, about two miles above Sempilltower, the glen from which this very stream comes down."

"Yes," said Beatrice; "I have heard Mr. Carmichael talk of it. Indeed, he and I rather differed on the subject; for though no one more admires the heroism of many of the poor Covenanters, I have not much sympathy with the cause."

"Nor I, perhaps," replied Arthur. "And had Carmichael lived in those days, I can fancy that no one would have been more disgusted than he with the proceedings of the party, though that offers no excuse for their oppressors."

"No, certainly not," answered Beatrice.

"And has Mr. Carmichael requested his friend to preach upon the subject?"

"Yes, for the purpose of raising a collection, as a beginning to the work. He is to preach upon the spot, in the open air, in the very locality of the conventicle which was interrupted by Creighton, at the time these men were shot. No church hereabouts would contain the auditory he is sure to have, for they say his eloquence is something superhuman. You must certainly attend, Miss Lockhart."

"We must try to persuade Aunt Grace to take us, Helen," said Beatrice. "I should so like to hear Edward Irving."

"So should I," added Helen. "But what would Miss Violet say if she knew that we went to a field preaching about the Covenanters?"

"And we are rather in disgrace as it is," pursued Beatrice. She said it smilingly, yet a pang which would not be subdued shot through her heart as she did so. But the voice and the smile of Arthur roused her from this trance of painful thought; and all ideas save those connected with him, and anticipative of their next meeting, passed from her mind, as she felt the farewell pressure of his hand, and lingered

beneath the trees till the last glimpse of his departing form was lost in the twilight.

The sisters hastened home ; and found that Miss Grace, faithful to her promise, had kept tea for them, although her mother and she had long ago had their's. The old lady was restrained from the displeasure which she would most probably have manifested at their unpunctuality, by the circumstance of the tailor, Saunders Steek, having arrived at the house to request an audience on some matter of weighty import connected with a livery coat ; and this conference, at which Lawry Mac Fyke assisted, was at that time proceeding in some department of the lower regions. Miss Grace was thus left at liberty to enjoy her niece's account of their walk, and to hear with undisguised satisfaction, of the companion they had had in it. Her consent was willingly given to the plan of attending the proposed " field preaching ;" and accompanied, moreover, by an insinuation that her nieces would most likely have a more efficient escort than her's ; and in talk like this they lingered over the tea table, in the dusk, till startled by the entrance of the parlour-maid with candles into a recollection of the reproof to be expected from Mrs. Lockhart, should she

return and find the tea-things still upon the table. Remembering her arrears of practising, Helen then snatched up a bed room candlestick, and proceeded to the school-room, followed by her sister.

Beatrice placed herself by the open window behind the flowers, and sat gazing out into the dim and deepening shades of evening; the soft, warm air fanning her long floating ringlets, and the dreamy rustling of the leaves and boughs lulling her heart into an equally dreamy repose, full of vague and delicious thoughts. Long did she sit musing there; and when at last she quitted her position, and drew nearer to the light, it was to take Helen's vacated place at the pianoforte, and pour forth the feelings which swelled within her heart, in one low mournful ballad or plaintive and wild snatch of melody after another; till interrupted by the summons to prayers. And long after Helen had sunk to sleep that night, did Beatrice, leaning on the table in their bed-room, where stood their bibles, prayer-books, and other companions of their most private hours, turn over the pages of the "Christian Year," and call up before her vivid fancy a vision of a shaded window overlooking a blue and spark-

ling sea, and a couch sustaining the wasted form of a lovely dying girl; by whose side watched a tender mother; and at whose feet sat a lover, with his whole devoted heart in the eyes which never wandered from her face, save when at her bidding his low and musical voice gave utterance to some of those very poems.

“ Oh, happy creature ! blessed, blessed death-bed ! ” was her internal ejaculation, as with this picture before her eyes, she strove to conjecture what passages they were which had been marked by the dying hand of Violet Sydney.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ Yet, Lord, in memory’s fondest place
I shrine those seasons sad,
When looking up, I saw thy face
In kind austereness clad.
I would not miss one sigh or tear,
Heart-pang, or throbbing brow;
Sweet was the chastisement severe,
And sweet its memory now.”

LYRA APOSTOLICA.

“ How I wish you were able to accompany us all to the Hunter’s Hope to-morrow, Bertram!” said Mr. Carmichael, as on the eve of the much-talked-of Thursday he sat alone with his friend. “ I am sure you would appreciate that wonderful man.”

“ I have no doubt of it,” replied William. “ Eloquence has,—had, when I could enjoy it—great power over me. But, Carmichael, I own I am inclined to question the efficacy of such excitement. I have listened to much pulpit-eloquence in my day,—listened with intense

delight, and yet have come away as much of a sceptic as I went to hear it. My experience is more in favour of the still small voice than of the whirlwind and the fire."

"I humbly acknowledge," said Mr. Carmichael, "that unless there be the working of a higher power to bring home the divinest gifts of eloquence to the heart, the preacher may expend it in vain. Still it is a mighty engine; and has often been proved an efficacious one; and we may not neglect any of the means vouchsafed us. Never did the Church stand more in need of rousing than now! and it is my profound conviction of this fact which has principally moved me to the efforts I have made, to bring amongst my people a man whom I believe to have been raised up as an instrument in God's hands, to revive the decaying life and energy, and waken up the slumbering faith, of Scotland."

William Bertram, whose conviction of the awful realities of revelation had come to him through the medium of the calm and holy teaching of the Church of England, did not entirely concur in the views which were beginning to open upon the mind of his friend, long dissatisfied as it had been with the imper-

fections inherent in Presbyterian principles and Church-polity. Still there was so much in them that was captivating to a thinking and imaginative character,—so much of love for the souls of men, so determined a recognition of many truths too long kept in the background, that at this stage of what were afterwards denominated Irvingite opinions, there could be no wonder that they were embraced by so many sincere and earnest men, who acutely felt the deficiencies around them, and desired to see the revival of a more living faith. A long discussion ensued between the friends, of a nature too solemn for these pages; but in the course of which Mr. Carmichael recognised with the deepest thankfulness, the total change which had come over the opinions of one whom he had long regarded with anxiety for his eternal welfare, rendered more intense by the admiring affection which he bore him.

“Do you remember, Carmichael,” said William with a mournful smile, in answer to some such expression of feeling from the former, “do you remember once saying to me, in reference to my doubts on the subject of truth, that it was possible the light might only be admitted to my soul at last, through the

chinks and ruins of the fair fabric of earthly happiness? Strangely prophetic words they were! How often did they haunt me then! How often have they since recurred to me!"

"I remember it well," replied Mr. Carmichael. "I too have often recalled my own words. It *is* strange how often we are unconscious prophets for ourselves or others! It has been so, Bertram, in the dealings of God's mysterious providence, and the blow which levelled that fair fabric has been no light one! But now—now that the first agony is over, would you have it otherwise? Would you regain the buoyancy of unbroken health,—the extasy of unclouded happiness, at the price of returning to the distracting doubts of scepticism,—of living once more without God in the world?"

"I thank Heaven, no! I can most sincerely answer no!" solemnly returned William. "That blessed light were cheaply purchased by the loss of all beside. And all is not lost to me. All I loved is mine still, though hidden for a time.

'Thou takest not away, oh Death!'

There is a repose, a peace, in loving the de-

parted, unknown to living love. Not always—not at all times—for the weakness of humanity cleaves fast; and there are hours when the longing once more to behold, and hear, and clasp what can meet us no more, save in dreams, on this side the grave, becomes almost insupportable. But, blessed be the merciful hand which tempers all suffering, these hours are few in comparison. And I have much left to live for, if life be spared me; much wasted time to redeem. If I can never more know earthly happiness myself, I would fain, at least, watch over that of others.”

“Over Arthur’s in particular,” said Mr. Carmichael.

“Over Arthur’s beyond all other,” replied William. “I feel that he stands more in need of watching over than any one else with whom I have to do. With all his brilliant and attaching qualities, there is an absence of stability in him,—a want of fixed purpose,—at times an openness to influence, which often render me uneasy for his future career. And his temptations are all to come. Does he, do you think, mean to accompany my aunt and Emily to-morrow?”

"I heard him, I think, decline doing so," replied Mr. Carmichael.

"And the Miss Lockharts are positively going?"

"I am certain they intend it," said Mr. Carmichael in a tone of some constraint.

"He has declined accompanying the party from this, then," returned William, "in order to be free to join them. That is his predominating influence at present, and I can but trust and pray that it may continue."

They were sitting in the dusk, in William's room, with scarcely any other light than that cast by the fitful blaze of the fire, which did not render their countenances visible to each other; but there was a minute's pause ere Mr. Carmichael, in his usual calm low tone, replied to the last speech.

"It must be a powerful influence. She, Miss Lockhart, is no common character. Still, Bertram, they are both so young, that I should tremble to encourage it; less, perhaps, for *his* sake——"

"I should have trembled to originate it," said William, filling up the pause. "Nay, I should have felt it equally wrong and unwar-

rantable to fan a flame which might otherwise have expired of itself. These are things which none of us have any right to do with each other. But I found nothing of the sort left for me to do; and perceiving that the attachment exists, I cannot but rejoice over, and forward it by every means in my power; for I look upon such an attachment, if it do but strike root sufficiently deep, to be above all others the species of safeguard which Arthur will require."

"If it strike root sufficiently deep," subjoined Mr. Carmichael; "but there is the doubt. He has seen little of the world as yet."

"True," replied William; "and were Beatrice Lockhart, however lovely and engaging, a mere common-place girl, I should quite agree with you. But she is something very different; one of those beings whom a man, capable of appreciating, does not forget. The love we bear to genius is an abiding sentiment: it clings to the soul."

There was another brief silence, again broken by Mr. Carmichael.

"Your father, Bertram,—both your parents—they are ambitious for Arthur, as they were for you."

"And how did their ambition fare with

me?" said William, a tone of involuntary bitterness for one moment mingling in his words. "I never allow myself to dwell on that subject," he added, checking himself. "There are some things on which we dare not trust ourselves to look back, and that is one. But all has been overruled by a hand of love and mercy. Do not suppose me Utopian enough, however, Carmichael, to dream that past experience will suffice to warn against future errors of that kind. Arthur must look for opposition,—must nerve himself to bear it. But such discipline is good for a man if he be but true to himself, and if his love be worthily bestowed. It is not from without, but from within, that his temptations and trials will come."

"It is strange,—strange indeed," exclaimed Mr. Carmichael, "to see how worldly ambition does blind men!"

"Aye, strange indeed, everywhere; strangest of all *here*," said William. "Parental ambition has been a losing game at Kingsconnell. One would almost say that the very coincidence, or whatever we may call it, of that picture, had been meant as a warning to my father; one of the many slighted warnings of which our whole life is full."

"Many they are," replied Mr. Carmichael. "Our daily life is full of types and symbols, figuring the unseen,—and the short-sighted worldliness which closes men's eyes and ears to so much that is meant to impress them for good, is one of the most signal triumphs of our great spiritual adversary."

"Yes, and still more so the mode in which men, while working out their own obstinate will, are made to fulfil the threats and judgments which timely submission might have averted. I sometimes feel," added William, "as if my brother's fate hung in the balance; and that Beatrice Lockhart might be his guardian angel. I should be termed a visionary by most people,—though not by you,—for giving way to such fancies. They may be so. I cannot tell. But I strongly suspect that we should act more wisely than we do, if we more frequently opened our minds to what are so denominated."

At this moment a tap at the door of the room was followed by the entrance of Arthur, dressed for dinner, bright and animated as usual.

"You will dine with us to-day, won't you, William?" he asked of his brother, after

shaking hands with Mr. Carmichael. "We are not a large party to-day. I came down to give you my arm."

"Thank you, Arthur," replied William, "but I think I should prefer the quiet of my own room this evening. I had rather a long drive to-day, and I do not feel up to the noise and hustle above stairs."

"Oh! but indeed you are, my dear fellow, if you would only think so. Do come. It is much better for you than moping here all alone. Come, to oblige me."

"I would do much to oblige you, Arthur," returned his brother with a smile, "but you must excuse me in this. I am not very well to-night."

"No, really?" said Arthur in a tone of anxiety, and sitting down by his brother. "What is it? shall I send some one off for Chisholm?"

"On no account, my dear boy," replied William. "It is nothing in the world. Only I am weary, idle, useless, I fear. I should be no acquisition up-stairs; and I shall be all the fitter to enjoy Carmichael's society in the evening, and your's, if you are inclined to bestow it upon me, for a little rest now, that is all."

"I hope it is really all?" said Arthur.

“ Shall I ring for Henderson to get you coffee ? You will lie down, I trust, William, and rest ? You have been doing too much, I fear ; my aunt said she thought so, this morning. But there is the gong. Shall we go aloft, Carmichael ? ” And as they traversed the passages, and ascended the stairs, he continued to pour forth interrogatories as to Mr. Carmichael’s opinion of his brother’s looks and strength, with a genuine anxiety of affection which there was no possibility of mistaking, and which deeply touched the clergyman.

“ They do most truly love one another ! ” he said to himself. And as, in sitting down at the dinner-table, his eye glanced from the dark portrait of *the Ancestor*, opposite to which he happened to be placed, and fell upon the brilliant beauty, the unclouded youth, of his descendant, he mentally ejaculated a prayer, whose absolute self-abnegation was known to none but God and his own heart, that if, as to all appearance was the case, Arthur were worthy the love of Beatrice Lockhart, she might, according to the elder brother’s hope and prayer, be indeed permitted to be the guardian angel of his life, and stand between him and the doom impending over his race.

CHAPTER IX.

"For the strength of the hills we bless thee,
Our God! our fathers' God!
Thou hast made thy children mighty
By the touch of the mountain sod.
Thou hast fixed our ark of refuge
Where the spoiler's foot ne'er trod.
For the strength of the hills we bless thee,
Our God; our fathers' God!"

MRS. HEMANS.

BRIGHTLY shone the warm sun of September on the wild and secluded glen, which had been chosen as the scene of Edward Irving's oratory. Divine service was to begin at three in the afternoon; but for several hours before that time, a stream of pedestrians, horsemen, carts, gigs, and even carriages, had been seen to direct its course towards the spot where the glen opened out into the more level country; and where the rich pasture and woodland

scenery, of which so large a portion of the county was composed, was terminated by a range of picturesque hills, and wild moors, stretching away to the northward. From the sloping sides of these heights there descended many a steep and rocky gorge, some of which were little more than channels for streams, small and insignificant in summer, but in winter raging mountain torrents. Some again were deep glens, gradually widening out towards their termination. Of these the largest and most picturesque was the Hunter's Hope, from whose lofty sources flowed the Connell Water.

At the mouth of this glen was a solitary farm-house, belonging to the Sempilltower property, surrounded by a large *steading*, or court of offices; whose stables, byres, cart-sheds, and out-houses of every description, were now turned into receptacles for as many of the numerous horses which had transported part of the assembled multitude, as could possibly be accommodated therein. These were the steeds belonging to the more aristocratic portion of the company; for the others were unharnessed from their several vehicles, and permitted to graze; or, tethered to the

shafts, stood devouring the provender which had been brought with them. The farm-house, with its screen of ancient ash trees, standing out in green relief against the purple background of heathery hills, was in this direction the *Ultima Thule* of civilization; the last point to which any wheeled conveyance of loftier pretensions than a cart could safely penetrate; though a bridle track, speedily narrowing to a rough and uneven pathway, ran up the glen behind it. The spot where tradition placed the site of the Conventicle, and where the rude grey head-stone indicated the martyrs' graves, was scarcely a mile above the house; but owing to an abrupt turn of the glen immediately after quitting the latter, it was completely removed from sight or hearing of any human habitation,—a scene of profound and total solitude, and almost savage wildness. The sides of the glen in some places, approached so near, and stood so perpendicularly up, that they scarce left space for the narrow pathway at their base. In another, widening and retreating backward, they left it free to proceed through a strip of bright green turf, nibbled into velvet softness by the sheep, such as is sometimes to be met with on the banks of

these moorland streams. The little river itself partook of the wildness around, flashing as it did, impetuously over its channel, and here and there gathering its waters into a deep pool, in order to fling them over the face of a rocky steep which obstructed its career. And still, as the pathway ascended, these little cascades became more frequent,—the impending cliffs more steep and jagged, and the bare hill-sides more lofty; while each new turn in “hunting the waterfalls” disclosed some new feature of beauty in the nooks and corners by the bank of the stream. Now it was a small plot of that fine velvet turf, surrounded by a wall of rock, whose crevices were grey with lichen and purple with wild thyme and bell-heathe; interspersed with light waving clusters of the blue and the white hare-bell; now a solitary mountain ash, its berries already gleaming scarlet through the leaves, flinging itself fantastically across the water; now a group of small, but graceful birches; now a blackthorn overgrown by wild honeysuckle, and niching itself, as if for protection from the elements, into a hollow of the hill. Small ingredients of beauty these, yet who, that is accustomed to the species of pastoral scenery we are describ-

ing, does not know their effect in connexion with it?

A little farther up, and the narrow gorge of hills widened, expanded as it were, from either side of the stream, and left an open space, an amphitheatre of rock and turf, gradually sloping upwards to the craggy heights which seemed to have retreated from their former close neighbourhood. At the upper extremity of this amphitheatre they again approached more closely than ever; and just where they did so, the water came dashing over the face of a steep rock, in a cascade of considerable size, which fell into a large natural basin; and thence, by a succession of falls, into another and another, till it issued in a channel which for a few yards was more of a pebbly description than the rest of its course, and so left the vexed stream a brief interval of comparative repose. Across the rocky summit of the principal cascade, a few wild rowans and ash trees stretched their stems, and flung their pendant branches; above them soared the bold, and in some places precipitous cliffs, which they seemed to unite, and so close in the prospect; whose stern repose and solitude were over-arched by the soft, hazy, dewy blue, of

the lovely autumn sky, its shadowy depths crossed by flakes and masses of white floating cloud. Here, in this scene of loneliness and seclusion, had the Covenanters of the district assembled in the days of "the Persecution ;" here partaken of the Holy Communion, for whose administration according to their form, the flat and table-like shape of many of the rocks afforded convenience, and here celebrated the sacred rite of baptism, by means of the natural fonts offered to them by the waterfalls. And here close by the spot where the victims' graves had received them when they fell, on the site which the enthusiastic minister had in his heart marked as appropriate for their contemplated monument, was erected the temporary pulpit of green sod, destined ere long to send forth to the assembled multitude the soul-stirring appeals of Irving.

A multitude indeed it was, which thronged this usually lonely spot, known in the county as "the Linns of Connell !" A couple of hours at least before the commencement of the service every available spot of ground was occupied by groups of all classes ; and still, as the time drew nearer, and the throng increased, people might be seen drawing closer and closer

together, and more carefully appropriating every inch of space; till at last, the entire area of the glen presented nothing but one mass of heads, ascending almost to the summit of the heights surrounding it. The farthest distance to which the sound of the preacher's voice might be supposed to travel, was crowded by expectant listeners; every heather bush, every point of rock, everything which could by contrivance afford support for the human person, was made to do so; and boys and young men were to be seen perched among the branches of the few trees which grew at hand, and promised to yield them more accommodation, such as it was, than the over-peopled bosom of Mother Earth. The whole assemblage was decorous and quiet in its conduct, beyond what could have been expected of so mixed a crowd; and no louder sound made itself be heard above the deep-toned murmur of so many voices, all speaking rather in an under key.

The party from Kingsconnell had arrived at an early hour upon the spot, and thus secured advantageous places near the pulpit. It consisted only of Miss Margaret Bertram, —whose enthusiastic admiration of everything

connected with the Covenanters would have led her, even at her age, to encounter almost any amount of bodily fatigue in expectation of such a mental feast as she this day anticipated, —her niece Emily, and an elderly gentleman, a visitor in the house. Sir Thomas was engaged at a road-meeting; and Lady Bertram had not unwillingly found herself compelled by politeness to remain at home with some ladies who were her guests; neither she nor they conceiving even the fashionable notoriety of Edward Irving to make him worth the price of mingling in such a crowd to hear him. Arthur had been reported missing when the party started, nor had they perceived any traces of him on the road as they came.

From Sempilltower the family detachment consisted only of Captain Sempill and his two nephews. Neither the Laird nor the old ladies liked the idea of encountering a crowd; and did not, moreover, though not for worlds would they have owned as much to Miss Menie Mark, feel quite easy in their minds as to Mr. Carmichael's late proceedings, or expositions of opinion on many points; for all which aberrations they were inclined to blame Edward Irving, whom they in consequence re-

garded with somewhat unfavourable eyes. Even Captain Sempill himself was less moved to attending the "field-preaching" by his admiration of oratory, than by his sympathy with the eagerness of his nephew Walter to do so; and the motive impelling Walter may be left to the ingenuity of the youthful reader to discover. But whatever effort it might have cost the uncle, was amply repaid by the benevolent pleasure with which he beheld the beaming countenances of his nephew and Helen Lockhart, as half-way up the glen the young men and he overtook Miss Grace and her nieces. They were alone; for Miss Willie and Miss Winter had set their faces like flint against the whole of this day's proceedings, and the old lady denominated Mr. Carmichael's scheme respecting the martyr's monument, "a daft-like wastrie o' money," which nothing would have induced her to countenance.

Arrived at the Linns of Connell, Captain Sempill and his youthful assistants contrived, after some searching and difficulty, to discover a position, on the outskirts of the densest crowd, and so far up the hill-side as to command a view of the pulpit over the heads of those beneath. Here, with their backs to a

rock, whose grey surface was richly hung with wild thyme, the party seated themselves; and had leisure, such of them whose eyes were not otherwise employed, to gaze at and admire the picturesque singularity of the scene. The susceptible imagination of Beatrice, in especial, was intensely occupied and interested; and she listened with eagerness to Captain Sempill's narrative of the circumstances attending the Conventicle which had ended in the murder so often mentioned; and which was given *con amore*,—as the wife and daughter of his ancestor of that day had been amongst the throng of worshippers, and had narrowly escaped capture. His tale at last ended, Captain Sempill perceived amongst various new-comers threading their way up the glen, the face of some acquaintance to whom he wished to speak, and accordingly left his seat by Beatrice for that purpose. He had not been gone above a few minutes, when a figure became visible, ascending the steep and narrow sheep-track below. It came on with that rapid bounding step which Beatrice knew so well, and her throbbing heart told her who it was, ere Arthur Bertram appeared, standing by her side.

“Dear me! Mr. Arthur Bertram, is this

you?" exclaimed Miss Grace, as he shook hands with her. The fastidious refinement of Arthur's nature had always caused him to shrink from coming in contact with the elder Misses Lockhart, as if he had revolted from connecting the idea of Beatrice with them at all; but, on the present occasion, it suited him to join Miss Grace's party, and he therefore replied to her with less of coldness and formality than was his wont at the few meetings they ever had; then turned to the young Sempills.

"Why Bertram!" exclaimed Walter, "your sister, Miss Bertram, told me the day before yesterday that you did not mean to come here to-day?"

"And Hugh said you were going snipe-shooting with him to-day," added Philip.

"Both were mistaken, or I changed my mind, or anything else you please," replied Arthur smiling. "'I am not *there*, for I am *here*.' So stands the fact, be the cause what it may." And after a few minutes' desultory conversation with the young men, he gradually made his way to the unoccupied side of Beatrice, and finally seated himself by her, a little round the projecting corner of the rock.

Captain Sempill, returning after this manœuvre had been successfully executed, observed the unwitting intrusion on his seat only with a quiet smile, and as quietly moved on, to displace Philip, and desire him to recline at their feet, while he himself took possession of the youth's vacated position beside Miss Grace.

"I like a support for my old back, Phil.," said he, "and you need none."

"Too happy to sit at your feet and Miss Lockhart's, uncle," replied Master Phil., resigning his place with the more willingness that the new one enabled him more conveniently to watch his brother's flirtation with the pretty Helen.

The crowd increased, till it seemed as if half the population of the county were contained in the Hunter's Hope. Time flew by; and to some of the party, in very deed,—

"All his sands were diamond sparks
That dazzle as they pass."

The hours seemed moments to Beatrice, thus seated by Arthur's side, in all the isolation belonging to a crowd, with such a scene before, and such a sky above her; and with that low voice of his falling on her ear in music,—those

eyes of his looking, as it were, into her very soul, as they carried on their wonted interchange of fanciful thought and deep feeling; every minute seeming to strengthen the sympathy between their minds. At last a murmur, running along the assemblage, proclaimed the approach of him whom they were awaiting.

"They are coming!" exclaimed Arthur. And at the words every one sprang to his feet, and all eyes were strained in the direction of the glen, from whose gorge were now seen emerging several figures dressed in black, who with difficulty made their slow way towards the pulpit, cleaving the mass of closely-packed human beings, who opened their ranks a little to let them pass, then closed up again behind them. In these, the quick eyes of the young men recognized Mr. Carmichael, the minister of St. Michael's, another neighbouring clergyman, a tall form—of course no other than the orator himself, and several of Mr. Carmichael's elders. They reached the pulpit, beneath which all, save one, arranged themselves. That one ascended it; and as he turned towards the people, every sound became hushed on the instant.

The personal appearance of Edward Irving

is too well-remembered by all who have seen and heard him, and too well-known by description to those who have not, to need delineation here. In the eyes of Beatrice and Arthur, too far removed to be able to remark the defect of vision which marred the beauty of his countenance, his aspect was in the highest degree picturesque and poetical; nor was its effect diminished by the quaintness of the Scottish accent in which the deep rolling tones of his voice gave utterance to the words of the Psalm, with the reading out and singing of which public worship commences in the Kirk of Scotland :—

“ I to the hills will lift mine eyes
From whence doth come mine aid,
My safety cometh from the Lord
Who Heaven and earth hath made.”

The awful and measured solemnity with which this beautiful old version of the Psalm was enunciated, thrilled to the heart of Beatrice ; the following verse in particular :—

“ The Lord thee keeps, the Lord thy shade,
On thy right hand doth stay ;
The moon by night thee shall not smite,
Nor yet the sun by day.”

But when the singing of the psalm began,—when low at first, then swelling into full chorus, the blended voices of assembled hundreds rose in one united strain to Heaven, and were again reverberated by the rocks and hills,—all discord and harshness softened by the open air and unlimited space around,—the effect was more than thrilling—it was overpowering. There is nothing which so keenly moves a highly sensitive nature as choral harmony; and so did many prove this day besides our heroine. Her eyes and Arthur's met, in mutual sympathy, on the first grand burst of sound; then Beatrice's were hastily averted, to conceal the gush of irrepressible tears which filled them, and some minutes elapsed ere she durst again look up.

The psalm was over, the prayer began; and who, that ever heard, can ever forget, the prayers of Irving? Who can forget the rapt devotion,—the gushing forth of the heart's eloquence, the solemn fervour which characterized them? The very accent in which they were uttered, strange and uncouth as it sounded in southern ears, had yet a charm of its own, as lending a peculiar character to his words. They seemed less the utterances of one of the modern world, than of some almost-inspired being

of the days of old,—some enthusiastic pastor and leader of the people, who had communed with his God in solitude among the mountains, till his spirit became rapt beyond the visible diurnal sphere, and he saw visions and heard revelations, of things disclosed to few on this side of time. The very aspect of the man,—his flowing hair, his gestures, the fire of genius and enthusiasm kindling in his glance,—all were unlike the age,—unlike any one but himself; scarcely to be imagined by any but those who have witnessed them.

Another psalm succeeded this inspired prayer; and then the preacher arose; and amidst a silence so profound, that over all that throng the rushing plash of the Linn was the only audible sound, proceeded to read out, in his solemn and powerful voice, the 11th chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, his utterance assuming a tone of thrilling sublimity towards the last verses.

“And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment:

“They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they

wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins ; being destitute, afflicted, tormented ;

“ (Of whom the world was not worthy :) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.”

From this he launched upon his subject, the faith and the constancy of the martyrs. Calm and comparatively unimpassioned at first, like a river gathering its tributaries as it flows, enlarging to a mighty torrent, and bearing all before it in one impetuous tide of rolling waters,—such was the stream of eloquence which poured itself forth upon the entranced auditory around him ; and carried them, heart and soul, along with the orator. His action corresponded with the course of his words ; calm at first like them ; and, like them, increasing as he proceeded, to what would have appeared the wildest excitement in any one else ; but in him looked only like the natural accompaniment to his overwhelming power over the human mind. Viewed in a sober moment, his gestures would have seemed frantic ; but no room was left for an idea of criticism, with any one capable of understanding or appreciating him. His was the most irresistible of all

influence—that arising from perfect sincerity, profound conviction, in the speaker, and strengthened ten-thousand-fold by the commanding presence of the loftiest genius.

The sermon, or oration, as Irving preferred terming his discourses, was a very long one; but his hearers were wont to lose all idea of time, and at the end of an hour, or even two, to listen with as rapt attention as they had done at first. On it went,—on, on,—in one unabated torrent of thoughts that breathe and words that burn, still rising in eloquence as it proceeded,—till at last, after winding up an impassioned period, describing the final triumph of the faithful, with an emphatic pause, he burst into the peroration of his discourse.

He pointed to the graves at his feet,—to the hills around—to the sky above him; he called upon his assembled countrymen to remember that Scotland had likewise her martyrs; that there, where they were sitting in peace and safety, to listen to the words which essayed to recall their memory,—there, on that very spot, had the forefathers of many now hearing him met, in danger, in stern and desperate determination, though in little fear;—met, under the sky which was their only covering,

beneath the everlasting hills, which were their only shelter, to listen to the words of life, which they could hear nowhere else,—to break the bread of life, elsewhere denied them. He flung his arms aloft, and apostrophized the rocks, the mountains,—the pure gushing streams which descended from their lonely heights; he called them to bear witness to the solemn scenes once transacted in their presence. Man might,—must—change and pass away; but they remained unaltered. And were there no living testimony left on earth to the truth of all, for which in every age the martyrs' blood had been shed, God was able of these very stones,—of these rocks and hills, to raise up witnesses unto himself. Nay, from the dust beneath their feet, He *would* one day raise up witnesses. The sod they stood on had been watered with the blood of martyrs; and from that unmarked sod, in the bosom of the solitary hills, would the martyrs one day rise again! Then, after a fervid descant upon their struggles and their sufferings, he appealed to their countrymen,—to their descendants,—whether those who were now reaping a harvest of tranquillity and religious freedom, which *they* had sown in blood and toil, did well

to leave the spot where they had yielded up their lives rather than compromise their principles, undistinguished by stone, or name, or epitaph ; whether such indifference to their memory did not savour of indifference to the cause for which they died ? He called upon all who heard him, and to whom sufficient worldly means had been allotted, to aid in effacing this reproach upon the age, and to unite in honouring the names of these dauntless men. But,—and here his voice took a tone of yet more awe-inspiring fervour,—it was not a mere material monument that he called upon them to raise. He adjured them to erect one more abiding still. In the name of the faithful departed, he summoned the living heart of Scotland to arouse from its torpor ; he bade its pulses vibrate once more to the lofty impulses of a holier and better day. He called upon the Church of Scotland,—upon her clergy and her people, to tighten their slackening grasp of the faith delivered to them by their forefathers ; to shake themselves free from the benumbing fetters of a cold, semi-infidel materialism,—to open their souls to the influences of the invisible world, pervading and encompassing the visible,—to believe as their fathers believed,

that when the hour of trial came, they might be enabled to stand fast as their fathers had stood. If not,—then might it fare with them as with those who of old built the tombs of the prophets, and garnished the sepulchres of the righteous,—that in the great day of reckoning, the day which should try all men's works as by fire, from beneath the very monuments erected by their degenerate descendants, the martyrs might arise to bear witness against them,—to be themselves the witnesses of their final condemnation. "Amen! May God bless his word! And to His name be the glory! Let us pray!" Thus ended the discourse. There was an instant of solemn stillness; then the vast audience arose to their feet, with a sound like "the rushing of many waters;" the preacher extended his arms, and once more his voice, loud and clear as a trumpet, was uplifted in the words of a prayer even more sublime than the former.

It ended; and the service was concluded by singing the whole of that fine paraphrase of Scripture,

" Behold! what witnesses unseen
Encompass us around!"

Once more the blended voices of the multitude ascended in a storm of sound to Heaven;

and this time, if possible, with increased sublimity of effect ; for the shadows of evening were already beginning to steal over the scene ; the height of the hills encompassing the glen, rendering it twilight there, although the sun were scarcely set upon the low country. The unutterable calm of a beautiful evening amongst the hills was settling down upon all around ; the dim blue of the sky was deepening above, and the sound of the Linn bore a deep undertoned burden to the holy strain. It was an hour and a scene never to be forgotten,—one of those which stamp themselves indelibly on the memory. Thus felt Beatrice, as after an ineffectual attempt to join in the psalmody, she was forced again to turn away her head, to conceal the tears of high-wrought sensibility. When she looked round, the eloquent eyes of her companion met her's, their lustre suffused from the same cause. Instinctively their eyes had sought each other, all through the long discourse, at every passage more than usually striking ; their silent communion of spirit had been perfect without the aid of words.

The blessing was pronounced in a tone and manner of reverential fervour corresponding to all the rest ; and the service ended. Now arose,

like streams released from the fetters of the frost, on all sides the murmur of speech ; not indecently loud, but more unrestrained than it had yet been, as the congregation proceeded to break up and disperse. To go round collecting money amongst so many, in such a locality, had been manifestly impossible ; but church-plates had been placed at the narrow entrance to the glen, which was the only mode of egress, for the purpose of receiving contributions towards the proposed monument ; and beside them now stood the elders, who had accompanied Mr. Carmichael. The collection was very large and liberal, almost every individual bestowing something.

Our party slowly made their way, as the pressure of the crowd would permit ; a pressure so great as to necessitate each gentleman offering his arm to a lady ; and that slow progress down the glen, her arm in Arthur's, his enthusiastic commentaries on what they had heard, poured forth as they went along, was not to Beatrice among the least of all that day's enjoyments. As they were all on foot, they proceeded together through bye-paths in the woods, below the farm of Hunterston, until, issuing forth upon the high

road near to the gates of their respective residences, the gentlemen accompanied Miss Grace Lockhart and her nieces to that of the Grange, and there bade them farewell.

Slowly and in silence they paced up the darkening avenue, each member of the trio plunged in a deep trance of thought. Miss Grace's had reference principally to bodily weariness and exhaustion. Helen's young heart was innocently occupied in a mental review of all that Walter had been saying to her; and the deeper spirit of Beatrice now dwelling on the o'ermastering eloquence to which she had just been listening,—now on the evident impression which it had made on Arthur. In all the sanguine hopefulness of youth, she indulged an idea that it might form the beginning of a great change in him, and a deliverance of his mind from the painful thralldom of doubt. Beatrice had yet to learn that it is possible for a highly-imaginative nature to love, admire, and appreciate all that is sublime, pathetic, and poetical in religion, while yet the heart remains totally uninfluenced,—the deep waters unruffled by the brooding wings of the spirit of God.

CHAPTER X.

"It is a lesson which genius too, and wisdom of every kind must learn, that its kingdom is not of this world. It must learn to know this, and to be content that this should be so; to be content with the thought of a kingdom in a higher and less transitory region."

GUESSES AT TRUTH.

SOME little time after "the field-preaching," a breaking-up took place of the gay party assembled at Kingsconnell. The guests departed; and Arthur accompanied one of his friends on a visit to a neighbouring county. Hugh returned to Sandhurst; and Sir Thomas and his lady themselves left home, in consequence of a hasty summons to the sick-bed of Lady Bertram's mother, at a great distance in the south. Miss Margaret Bertram, her eldest nephew, and Emily, were thus left alone in the house; and the latter had not endured above two days of such unwonted solitude before she appeared

one morning, as of old, at the school-room window of the Grange, the bearer of a petition in her aunt's name and her own, for a visit from Beatrice and Helen,—so long as their grandmother and aunts could be induced to spare them.

It need not be doubted that this request met with an urgent seconding from the two girls. To Helen, anything that promised escape from home was welcome; to Beatrice, the bare idea of living under the same roof with the family of Arthur Bertram, even though he himself were absent, conveyed intense delight. The invitation was accepted, with the usual amount of objections from their Aunt Willie and Miss Winter. But the reign of the latter was drawing to a close. Captain Lockhart had intimated to his sisters that he thought, at the November Term, that her post as governess of his daughters might be vacated. Her objections, therefore, were not allowed much weight; as Mrs. Lockhart conceived that the visit to Kingsconnell would be "a great advantage" to her grand-daughters; and at five o'clock in the afternoon of the following day, Lowry Mac Fyke and his steeds stood ready at the door to transport Beatrice and

Helen, with the necessary provisions of attire, to the scene of so much anticipated happiness.

The day was closing in one of those heavy mists, with drizzling rain, so common in our climate as the autumn begins to advance; and which, above all aspects of external nature, require the appliances of warmth and cheerfulness in-doors, to render them endurable; and it was a scene wofully deficient in either, upon which the sisters, with an ineffable sensation of relief, felt that they were now for some little time looking their last, as they bade farewell to the group in the parlour. The orthodox period for lighting fires had not yet arrived at the Grange; but the inveterate damp of the afternoon had proved too much even for the family-economy, and after much grumbling on Miss Willie's part and with not a little reluctance on Mrs. Lockhart's, a device called a "fire-basket" had been resorted to, a species of grate within a grate, in consequence of poor Miss Grace's pathetic representations that she should really die of rheumatism else. This apology for a fire was now smouldering and crackling in the chimney; and her chair drawn so close to the fender as to allow her feet to be within it; her gown, as usual, laid back,—and

the usual novel slipping off her lap into the ashes, as she turned in her seat to kiss her nieces, and wish them much enjoyment, ere they departed. The old lady was composing herself for her usual nap;—and upon the clothless table, whence dinner had been but a few minutes withdrawn, a fact to which the atmosphere of the room bore ample testimony, Miss Willie, aided by Miss Winter, was in grim silence occupied in cutting out a set of night-chemises. Such was the party which Beatrice and Helen left behind them; and such the scene whence a twenty minutes' drive transported them to one so widely-different, that the two might have appeared separated by hundreds of miles.

This was the library at Kingsconnell; where a magnificent fire was flinging its ruddy glow upon the lofty carved oak ceiling, the crowded book-cases of a similar material, the rich curtains of fawn-coloured cloth bordered with ruby velvet,—the massive and luxurious furniture; the very contrast of the mist and driving rain without, disclosed through the windows, serving to heighten the feeling of comfort inspired by all within. Emily, who was seated at her harp, started up as the Misses Lockhart were an-

nounced, and advanced to meet them with all her usual warmth of welcome; which warmth was reflected in the kind and benevolent greeting of her great-aunt, as she arose from her arm-chair near the fire, and laid down her knitting to extend a hand to each young visitor. From a deep *fauteuil* on the opposite side of the fire-place, in which he was reclining, William Bertram too arose to meet them, a smile of unaffected pleasure lighting up his whole countenance.

"It is truly kind of you both, dear Miss Lockharts," said he, "to come to cheer our diminished household in this way, when we have no amusement to offer you."

"It is indeed," rejoined Miss Margaret. "But Miss Lockhart looks, William, as if she did not like your seeming to imply that she sought her friends' society only for the sake of amusement."

"If I thought Mr. Bertram really meant *that*," said Beatrice with a smile, "I own I should feel hurt."

"But I am sure you could not suppose that I meant anything so unkind and untrue?" returned William, taking her hand.

"No," said Miss Margaret, answering for

the blushing girl. "She as little supposes so as you think her such a mere summer-friend. Now my dear," she continued, laying her hand affectionately on the shoulder of Beatrice, "Emily will take you to your room. We dine at half-past six just now, having no sportsmen in the house."

"How little can they imagine, Beatrice," exclaimed Helen, when Emily had left her guests alone in the elegant and comfortable room assigned them, "how little can they guess, intimate as we are, all that makes the difference between their home and ours! "

"Little indeed, Helen!" replied Beatrice. "There is a gulf between us."

But this conviction did not at that time come home to the sensitive heart of Beatrice with the chill which she had sometimes experienced when Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram were at home. Too well-bred to neglect any visitor in their house, still the only impression which the manner of either, but especially of Lady Bertram, had ever made upon their daughter's friend, was that of polite indifference; and such indeed was all that either felt, towards a young creature so completely unimportant in their eyes. What their feelings

might have been, had they been aware of the extent of Arthur's regard for Beatrice, was another affair; but of this, from the mode in which their son had all along conducted his intimacy with her, and the total absence of confidential habits between the parents and children, they were at this time quite unconscious. Indeed, the bare idea of her beautiful and distinguished son, for whom in her heart she presaged the most brilliant of destinies, attaching himself seriously to a grand-daughter of vulgar old Mrs. Lockhart, would have appeared to Lady Bertram too ridiculous to dwell upon for a moment; and thus, as so frequently happens, the parties most nearly interested in the young man's proceedings, were precisely those who knew nothing of an affair, concerning which almost every other person in the neighbourhood could in a measure have enlightened them.

Their daughter, had she chosen, might have told them more; yet certainly not all the truth. It was impossible that Emily should not have perceived her brother's admiration of Beatrice, but still, it had never occurred to her as anything very serious, anything beyond a flirtation. She was not in Arthur's confidence, for their

cast of character was too widely different to admit of it; and she knew nothing whatever of those walks in the woods, or meetings in the school-room at the Grange, by means of which his acquaintance with Beatrice had ripened into such perfect intimacy. The seeds of worldliness and ambition had struck deep root in Emily's mind, but their growth had as yet been slow, and checked by the wholesome influences of sorrow and anxiety respecting her elder brother, and comparative seclusion from the gay world in consequence. Her early girlish affection for Beatrice Lockhart had once or twice, since she began to enter into society and form friendships with those of rank and fortune equal or superior to her own, been temporarily weakened; but as yet had never failed to revive again when they once more came in contact; and during the present season had been kept alive and strengthened by the admiration, totally distinct from love, expressed for her friend by her brother William, whose opinions had great weight with her; as had those of her great-aunt, which were not less warmly and favourably pronounced on the same subject. Under the influence of these feelings, and free from that of her mother's

coldness, with no admirers present to inflate her vanity, no gay or titled intimates to engross her attention, Emily welcomed the presence of her early companions with all the affectionate cordiality of the old school-room times ; and some days of their visit to Kingsconnell glided on in a calm and tranquil happiness to both sisters, which formed a marked contrast to the usual course of their life. Nothing could be quieter or less exciting ; but there was an atmosphere of elegance and refinement in that house, at all times most refreshing to those whose present position differed so widely from their early habits of life ; and this was at present combined with so much of affectionate kindness as of itself could not have failed to render them happy.

Fondly as Beatrice loved Emily Bertram, the society of her brother had for her at this time a deeper attraction. Where friendship, without an admixture of any warmer feeling, does exist, as it sometimes does, between man and woman, it is one nearly perfect of its kind ; and such was the case with her and William. His heart was in the grave, and her's absorbed in attachment to his brother, but a regard the most sincere, which each day's experience

served to strengthen, united them to each other. There was something calming, elevating, and improving in his society and conversation ; and the interest attached to his romantic and melancholy story invested him with additional attraction in her eyes. To William, on the other hand, the freshness, purity, and originality of her character were charming ; and the charm was heightened by the resemblance, on which he so loved to dwell, between her and the lost Violet. He never named her to Beatrice ; but he loved to sit gazing at her face while she spoke, and recalling, through its glowing loveliness, those pale and etherialized lineaments, as he had last beheld them. Above all, he delighted to listen to her voice reading aloud, as at Miss Margaret's request, she frequently did. She would raise her eyes from her book, and meet his fixed upon her with a gaze of mournful intensity which haunted her long after, and of which she well knew the meaning. But no part of the day at Kingsconnell was so delightful to Beatrice as those evening hours, when the whole party assembled round the fire-place in the library, which was their present sitting-room ; and where, in addition to William's conversation, she had the

privilege of sharing that of Miss Margaret Bertram,—a woman of a very superior mind, whose character combined, in no ordinary degree, great strength with sweetness, whose varied experience of life rendered her a most instructive companion, and whose heart remained as youthful, and as full of warm sympathy with youth, as if the frosts of age had not long since fallen on her brow. Highly-pleased as she was with both young people, Miss Margaret had conceived a strong affection for Beatrice, and a deep interest in what she felt to be her singularly-unprotected situation. The sympathy between her mind and that of her nephew William had always been much greater than that connecting any other two members of the family, and she shared his feelings in the present instance as in so many others.

The only guest whose accidental presence once or twice augmented the family-party during these days, was Mr. Carmichael; and Beatrice, on these occasions, could not help fancying that she perceived a difference in his manner towards herself,—a reserve and constraint, such as had before struck her, in the course of their last readings together, which

had now for some time been discontinued. But she was too single-hearted, and too free from coquetry, to suspect any hidden meaning in this change. She regretted it much ; but resolved it into pre-occupation of mind on other subjects ; above all, on those connected with Church-matters, on which Mr. Carmichael had more than ever seemed to dwell, since his late renewal of intimacy with Edward Irving. Many discussions on these points took place between him, Miss Margaret, and William Bertram, in the evenings which he spent at Kingsconnell during Beatrice's stay, to which she sat listening with keen interest, whilst Emily and Helen would on such occasions withdraw, and betake themselves to music, or to the enjoyment of a novel in the apartment of the former.

Miss Margaret Bertram was an enthusiastic Presbyterian. All the romance and vivid imagination, of which she still retained no ordinary share, were in her enlisted on the side of the heroes of the Covenant ; whose feats and sufferings were familiar to her memory as the events of yesterday. But no one had more ample toleration for the different opinions of others ; and thus, though in her secret soul

she greatly regretted that her beloved nephew should have attached himself to the Church of England, this circumstance in no wise interrupted the harmony existing between them. It was matter of even more regret to her, that these young creatures, in whom she was beginning to take so deep an interest, should have been educated in the Communion of the Church in Scotland ; upon which all the prepossessions so early instilled into Presbyterians had taught her to look as full of error, and imbued with a spirit of persecution ; and in the fullness of her affectionate zeal, she welcomed and encouraged the discussions of which we have spoken, as a means, she fondly hoped, of opening the eyes of Beatrice to the defects in Scottish Episcopacy. But although the latter listened with intentness to her's and Mr. Carmichael's conversation, there was something that came more home to her heart, and its early associations with a voice long silent in the dust, in the low and persuasive tones of William Bertram's, not less than in his sentiments.

It was after one of those long conversations, one evening, that Emily, who had been for some time absent from the circle, returned with Helen to the library, and drew in her

chair by her brother's sofa, with a laughing remark on Beatrice's absorption in topics so recondite.

"Helen and I have been reading that charming new novel,—'Reginald Dalton,' for the last hour, Beatrice, whilst you have been plunged in all those transcendental discussions. I am sure you would have been much better employed in joining us."

"I finished 'Reginald Dalton' last night in my room," said Beatrice; "and I so enjoy listening to the transcendental discussions, Emily. I do not presume to do more than listen."

"'Ca viendra avec le tems,'" replied Emily.

"No doubt of it, my dear, and why not?" returned Miss Margaret. "Miss Lockhart is not at all afraid, I am sure, of the prospect of increasing in knowledge as she advances in life."

Some playful conversation followed on the subject of female learning, and the jealousy with which, as Emily averred, mental superiority in women is regarded by the other sex. This, as a general proposition, was combated by her brother, though he admitted that it

held good in individual instances. The remarks of Miss Margaret Bertram on this head made an indelible impression on Beatrice; imbued as they were with that sweet persuasive power which wisdom, combined with love, in the aged, exerts over ingenuous youth.

“It appears to me, my dears,” she said, “that much of the pain and suffering inevitably accruing to superior minds, either in man or woman, from misapprehension or jealousy on the part of those inferior to themselves, is aggravated by the want of a clear perception of the end for which the gifts of intellect are bestowed. People consider talent too much as a means of self-exaltation or advancement, and not sufficiently as what it really is, a great trust, imparted for other and nobler ends. It is not given for the purpose of causing us to rest in a present state; quite the contrary. In proportion as the gifts of intellect and imagination heighten a man’s capacity for enjoyment, you will generally observe that his trials and disappointments are greater than those which befall ordinary minds. It must be so, to prevent those keen capacities for enjoyment becoming filled and satisfied with the perishing goods of Time. Humanly speaking, my dears,

it makes me tremble to meet with any young mind very richly endowed with gifts like these; for never, in the course of my long experience of life, have I seen any such bestowed without ample use being required of them; never have I seen the soldier fully armed for the strife, that the strife has failed to await him."

"Dear Aunt Margaret!" exclaimed Emily, "that is a most consoling doctrine for stupid people! Who would wish to be otherwise, if such a penalty must be paid for the privilege of talent?"

"No one, Emily," replied her aunt, "if there were no world beyond this,—and if enjoyment of its good things were the chief end of man. But what I have been saying surely bears a very different interpretation? Talent is a high and holy responsibility entrusted to man or woman, of which, as a strict account will be required, I would have them recognise the full value and importance. I would have them acknowledge the trust in lowliness and gratitude.

'Know *their* own worth, and reverence the Lyre,'

or whatever else the gift may be, and take with meekness the appointed Cross which for

their souls' sake must accompany it. Mr. Carmichael I see understands me."

"I think so, dear madam," said Mr. Carmichael. "And in how much holier and calmer a spirit would the Gifted meet their trials, were such truths more felt and more inculcated!"

"They would, Mr. Carmichael. But all we old pilgrims can do is to suggest truths of the kind to our young brethren, and leave the rest to time, experience, and the grace of God. Young hearts will have young hopes, from which it is hard for them to part," said the benevolent old lady. "It is not easy to take up the Cross. I have great sympathy with the young."

There was a few minutes' silence, which was broken by Emily, who drew her two friends away to the other end of the room, to sing with her some airs which they had been practising in the morning.

"And that is the reason, Mr. Carmichael," pursued Miss Margaret Bertram in a low voice, as the first chords of the prelude began to ring from her niece's harp,—“that is the reason why I said that, humanly speaking, it made me tremble to see any young mind very richly-

endowed. *That* is a creature," she added, indicating Beatrice by a movement of her head, "who gives me that sensation. She possesses no common measure of such endowments, and when I look at her, I am reminded of the fine gold which must be tried seven times in the fire,—or the silver which the Refiner and Purifier must cleanse from its dross in the furnace, until He see His own image reflected on its surface."

Mr. Carmichael made no audible reply, or the music drowned it. Involuntarily he raised his eyes to the portrait of the Master of Kingsconnell, which was visible from where he sat; and as he withdrew them, they encountered the intent and mournful gaze of William Bertram's, which had apparently taken the same direction.

On the following day, the family-party were much surprised by the sudden and unexpected appearance of Arthur, who walked quietly into the library about an hour before dinner-time. The only explanation which he gave of his return was, that the party at his friend's house had broken up sooner than was anticipated. Its real motive two of the circle were at no loss to guess, whilst another instinc-

tively felt it in her own heart. It was with a wild tumultuous throbbing there, very different from her recent feelings of tranquil happiness, that Beatrice made her toilet for dinner that day; and that her feelings were legible on her transparent countenance, might be gathered from Helen's exclamation, as she kissed her sister before they went down stairs.

"Dearest, dearest Beatrice! what a bright colour you have! I never saw you look so pretty in my life. And I am so delighted that Mr. Arthur Bertram has come home! There was nothing else wanting to make us quite happy."

So thought her sister many times that night, and during three following Elysian days. They glided by—too swiftly, only too swiftly,—but the traces they left on the memory were indelible. It was not that Arthur showed Beatrice any embarrassing devotion of manner, for this he seemed especially careful to avoid; but there is something in the familiar intercourse of domestic life with the object of an affection, as yet scarce acknowledged to one's self, above all things delightful to the heart. The morning-greetings at the cheerful breakfast-table, the discussion of the day's plans,

the few hours' separation, followed by the long afternoon out-of-doors together,—one day spent in a long and distant drive, another on a rambling, sketching excursion; another on an expedition to a loch, far away amongst the moors; all under the bright influences of sunshine and sweet air, and fine scenery,—what could be more conducive to happiness, or to innocent fullness of confidence? The presence of Arthur as their companion enabled the young people to prolong and extend these excursions as they could not have done without him; and the circumstances in which they were placed rendered him the kindest and most unwearied of escorts. Then came the pleasant gathering before dinner in the library,—the social meal,—the evening, with its mingled enjoyments of music, conversation, and sometimes reading aloud; the unrestraint and kindness which under the influence of Miss Margaret Bertram pervaded the whole circle; and the evident happiness of the two brothers in each other's society, which it was so delightful to witness, and to observe how each seemed to elicit all that was most amiable and attractive in the other. All these things combined to render this brief period one for

memory to dwell on many a year after all had passed away.

The last-named excursion in particular, to the Moorland Loch, which occupied what afterwards proved to be the last day the party spent together, was one which Beatrice at the time felt that she never should forget. The day was one of the loveliest of early October, calm, mild, and windless; one of shaded sunshine; the sky all flecked and marbled with white and grey motionless cloudlets overhead, and of a clear, pale, pearly blue towards the horizon. In the woodland drive through which the first part of their road lay, the ground began to be strewn with the yellowing larch-leaves, and the broad pale foliage of the sycamore and horse-chestnut; whilst the graceful ash bent its motionless branches droopingly towards the earth, their dark-green summer hue now giving place to a lighter, fainter tint, the precursor of decay, yet not altogether unlike in colour to the lovely and delicate verdure of their first bursting spring-tide; bearing to it the same resemblance which may sometimes be traced on the countenances of the dying, to the long-obliterated expression of their early youth. Then, as they gradually ascended towards the

high country, and the trees became fewer and of more stunted growth, there was something beyond measure pure, reviving, and exhilarating, in the air amongst the heathery braes, and the clear joyous sparkle of the mountain burns, which they crossed or skirted; till the road becoming rougher and more unsafe at every step, they at length alighted from the ponyphaeton in which Arthur was driving them, attended by a servant on horseback, and leaving the latter to find accommodation for the steeds in a farm-stable, pursued their way on foot.

Long and delicious was the ramble on the shores of the little solitary tarn, to which a picturesque and rugged path amongst the hills had guided them. And long and pleasant was the rest which they enjoyed as they ate their luncheon, on a bank of short green sward overhanging its margin; whilst Arthur, never unprovided in that respect, produced a volume of Wordsworth from his pocket, and read, in his deep melodious voice, strains well adapted to such a scene, and worthy of the organ which conveyed them. It seemed to Beatrice that she had never, until now, appreciated the full meaning of the poet,—that she could have sat there for ever to listen to his thoughts, uttered

by the lips of Arthur. But Time, inexorable Time, will tarry neither for poet nor for lover,—and at last it was reluctantly acknowledged that one poem more must be the last. That last one was the “Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey;” and to their exquisite beauty, the exquisite reading of Arthur added, if possible, a new charm. Nor could Beatrice ever lose the memory of his accents, and still less of the expression of his countenance, as at the conclusion he raised his eyes from the book, and sitting as he did directly opposite to her, fixed them for one minute full upon her’s.

..... “Nor wilt thou then forget
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake !”

It was with this music lingering in their ears and hearts, that the young party arose, and pursued their way down the hill-passes, on which the softened light of evening had now begun to fall. The sun, as he approached the horizon, had shone forth with more vivid brightness than he had done throughout the day, and the slanting rays of his setting were now gilding the rocks and heights. But ere

they reached home he had long been set, the heavens had become clear from clouds, and opposite the warm topaz-coloured west, the moon was rising in the clear, deep-blue sky. The dewy freshness,—the stillness, the repose, so different from a summer night, yet so perfect of their kind, penetrated to the very recesses of being; and as Beatrice, seated by Arthur's side, drove rapidly through the quiet woods, the low tones of their voices alone breaking the silence all around, a sensation of happiness, of freedom from care or trouble, more entire than she had ever experienced since childhood, and how incomparably more vivid than she had ever felt before! stole over her whole heart and soul.

Delicious too was the evening which followed this happy day! and never had the members of the party thought less of impending separation than they did throughout its pleasant hours,—that couple above all who were unconsciously the objects of so much anxious watching to other two of the number.

William Bertram, although he would not of his own accord have summoned his brother home while Beatrice was at Kingsconnell, could not refrain from feeling pleasure that he had

come, or from enjoying the sight of their happiness, and noting with keen satisfaction how all the better and higher qualities of Arthur seemed to expand in an atmosphere so genial as that which now surrounded him. Miss Margaret Bertram alone, entering with characteristic ardour into the feelings of these young creatures, could not divest her mind of anxiety respecting both.

But the kind old lady's perplexities, and the happiness of the party, were brought to a close sooner than she had anticipated; on the morning of the next day, the post-bag contained a missive, which filled Arthur with annoyance and vexation; being no other than a letter from his father, which had followed him from the house where the writer supposed him to be staying, and which contained a summons for him to repair without delay to the residence of his grandmother, Lady Jane Darcy, for the purpose of escorting his mother home. Sir Thomas himself was under the necessity of proceeding to London; and Lady Bertram having found her mother, on her arrival, already in the way of recovery from her alarming illness, could no longer, Sir Thomas said, control her impatience to return home,

previous to her eldest son's approaching departure southward for the winter. It was therefore necessary for Arthur to set off at a day's notice; a necessity which he acknowledged with manifest reluctance, and the announcement of which cast a damp over the spirits of the whole party.

They were still standing round the fire in the breakfast-room, as loth to separate now for a longer space than the morning, when a servant entering, delivered a note to Beatrice, which had just been brought from the Grange. She read it; and becoming as pale as death, handed it to her sister. Then, turning to Miss Margaret Bertram she announced in a faltering voice that they too were summoned to depart, and that the carriage would be sent over for them early that forenoon. Miss Margaret and her niece warmly expressed their regret at this unexpected notice; and Helen, raising her face, flushed to as deep a red as Beatrice's was pale, uttered the words—"Papa! they expect papa immediately—and—and——"

There was a dead silence; but Beatrice who was standing by Miss Margaret Bertram, felt her hand taken and pressed between those of the old lady. With a desperate effort at

self-command, she succeeded in swallowing the burst of hysteric sobs which was rising in her throat, and turning to her sister, begged her to go and collect the music-books, and other things belonging to them both, which were lying about the library, while she herself went up to her room to prepare for their departure.

"Do so, by all means, my dears," said Miss Margaret. "It is pleasant to see young people always ready at the right moment. Poor dear girls!" she exclaimed, as the sisters left the room,—“going to meet their step-mother for the first time! Are they not, Emily?”

"Yes, Aunt Margaret," replied her niece, "and they both adored their own mother, Beatrice especially."

"God help them!" ejaculated Aunt Margaret. "Arthur, my dear, you must give some orders about your journey too. Emily,—but you are going to Miss Lockhart? That is right. Is anything the matter with you, Arthur?" she added, as Emily left the room, turning to her nephew, who stood immovable, leaning his forehead on the mantel-piece. On his aunt's repeating the question, he raised his face, and turned it towards her, blanched to an unwonted paleness.

"No, dear Aunt, thank you, there is nothing the matter with me. I must go and tell William of all these marches and counter-marches." He hastily left the room as he spoke, and Aunt Margaret, shaking her head in pity and in ruth, slowly followed.

CHAPTER XI.

“ When Heaven sends sorrow,
Warnings go first;
Lest it should burst
With stunning might
On hearts too bright
To fear the morrow.”—LYRA APOSTOLICA.

“ BEATRICE, dearest Beatrice! try not to cry so!” said Emily, as entering her friend’s apartment, she found her in an agony of weeping. “ I do so feel for you, dear! I can well imagine how painful it must be for you to meet your step-mother; but perhaps you may like her better than you expect.”

“ Thank you, dear Emily; you are very kind!” replied Beatrice, striving to check her sobs.

“ And it is so sad,” pursued Emily, “ to have our pleasant time together come thus suddenly to a close! I cannot tell you how it grieves me! How little did we imagine, one

short half-hour ago, when we were planning what we should do to-day, how differently from our anticipations our day was to be spent ! It has all ended so suddenly ! and there will be such a scattering and breaking up amongst us by-and-bye ! Who can tell when we may all be together again ?”

“ Mr. Bertram goes away very soon, does he not ?” asked Helen, who had now entered, while Beatrice, who felt her heart, as it were, dying away within her, did not venture to utter a word.

“ Yes, in the course of a week or two,” replied Emily. “ We were all most anxious that he should have passed the winter abroad ; but he shrinks from the exertion of travelling ; and Dr. Chisholm quite concurs in the opinion of his London medical man, that his own feelings on the subject are the best criterion of what he may safely be urged to do.”

“ And he seems so very much better and stronger !” added Helen.

“ He certainly has been hitherto, but to-day he is not nearly so well. He is far from being so strong as we could wish to see him. The winter in the Isle of Wight will, we hope, do much for him. Dear Aunt Margaret has

most kindly offered to accompany him thither, and remain until we come."

"How very kind, at her age!" said Helen.

"It is most kind," returned Emily. "But she has more energy than almost any one I know; and she has always been so much attached to William. I think he will rather like the perfect quiet alone with her. The bustle we have had here this autumn has often appeared too much for him. Papa and mamma wished, if possible, to have gone to Ventnor at once when he did; but owing to our numerous engagements, that will be impossible, until January; so that will be a long pause. And Arthur, too, must leave us in winter."

"Not for the Continent?" asked Helen.

"Not yet. He begins, we hope, with the Foreign Office, but of course he will be appointed to an attachéship some day, somewhere or other. But he will find himself pretty closely confined, I imagine. We shall not see much more of him at home, I fear; not at Kingsconnell, at least. In London it will be different. I do look forward with great pleasure to the idea of having Arthur to go out with me next season in London. Last season was so sadly interrupted, and so melancholy,

from dear William's illness, that I may almost say the next will be my first."

"How very delightful it must be, Emily!" exclaimed Helen. "I do not wonder that you look forward to it with pleasure."

"It will be particularly so," said Emily, "from having Arthur. And really the *ecclât* of so very handsome a brother is something! It affords an agreeable prospect to keep in view, under present circumstances. One requires something to counterbalance the loss of one's brothers from the home-circle. It does render the house so silent and dismal when they are all away!"

Thus ran on Emily, almost forgetting present vexation in the anticipation of future enjoyment; till Beatrice, becoming nerved to repress her tears by the instinctive consciousness that their companion did not—could not—feel their departure so acutely as they did themselves, gradually composed herself so as to be able to join in the conversation, though with a desolate, aching pain at her heart, more bitter far than the sorrow which dissolves in weeping.

At length the preparations for departure were ended, and the sisters had no more left to

do but to place their out-of-door dresses all ready, and go down stairs to await their summons. Helen having accompanied Emily to her own apartment, in search of the missing volume of a book which the latter was about to lend her, Beatrice descended alone to the library, which she found unoccupied; and, standing in one of the deep window-recesses, remained dwelling, with a mournful gaze, now on the stately apartment within, the scene of so many hours of quiet happiness in her days of girlhood, and latterly of so many more, and far more vividly happy;—now on the more stately prospect without,—the terraces, the pleasance, and the rich expanse of lawn and woodland far below. All was smiling in its gorgeous autumnal beauty, beneath the rays of a sun more bright than that of the previous day, and an atmosphere not less calm and still: there was no change without, but a painful one within, since yesterday,—a sensation like awakening to sorrow from a dream of life-like distinctness and *un*-life-like felicity. How, indeed, was it possible that Emily should comprehend or enter into the feelings which were now swelling up in the heart of her friend? Just as these reflections drove back the tears which

were ready to overflow, the side-door affording access to the turret-staircase opened, and Arthur entered in a riding-dress, with his hat and whip in his hand.

"Miss Lockhart," he said, advancing towards Beatrice, "I was just about to look for you, in order to say farewell before I go. I am forced to ride in to the Bank at St. Michael's this forenoon; and you, I fear——"

"And we shall be gone before you return," answered Beatrice. "Yes, I expect Grand-mamma's carriage almost immediately."

"And so ends a very happy period!" exclaimed Arthur. "Why did I not return home sooner?"

Beatrice made no reply. She could not. She resolutely kept her eyes fixed on the window, and swallowed down the emotion which rendered them so dim.

"These few last days," pursued Arthur, "have appeared unlike any that I ever passed before. They gave me the impression of being a breathing-place,—a pause in life, ere its actual struggle and turmoil begin."

"As they soon must do with you, I fancy," said Beatrice in a low and trembling voice.

"Soon, very soon!" he replied. "I am

standing, as it were, upon the threshold of a new existence. What that may unfold I cannot tell, but there are periods of that which I am quitting,—many of my college days, and more amongst the woods of Kingsconnell, whose remembrance I would not exchange for anything which after-life can afford.”

“ You can scarcely tell *now*,” returned Beatrice. “ Your future will in all probability be one so varied, and so exciting !”

“ It may be so,” said Arthur ; “ but there are associations from which it is not easy to part. Yesterday—I never shall forget yesterday—Miss Lockhart !” He paused,—then added in a lower voice,

“ ‘ Ah ! little thought we ’twas the last ! ’ ”

“ But,” resumed he, after another pause of total silence, “ this is taking by far too solemn a farewell. After all, I shall be down again with my mother in the course of a week. Only we shall not meet again as we have done just now. There is no use in lengthening out pain,” he continued, in a tone of assumed cheerfulness. “ Farewell, Miss Lockhart, for the present. I trust you may—I hope,—. Farewell !” And with a long and fervent grasp of the hand, he left her.

Beatrice did not look up for some minutes. She had resolutely maintained her composure in his presence, but as he disappeared it gave way, and with her face hidden in her handkerchief, she was struggling to subdue her sobs, when Emily, followed by Helen, entered the room by the same door which had afforded egress to Arthur, whom she had just encountered on its other side. And on Beatrice at last raising her head, she met the eyes of her friend intently fixed upon her, with an expression of annoyance and perplexity, which was not diminished by the burning glow that rushed at once to the pale cheeks of Beatrice.

Fortunately for both, Miss Margaret Bertram at that moment entered, to request, in the name of her nephew William, that the Miss Lockharts would kindly come and bid him good-bye in his own sitting-room.

"I am grieved to say," she added, "that William does not feel at all well this morning; he has had a feverish night, and is quite unable to come up-stairs; so that he hopes, my dears, you will excuse this request, for he could not bear that you should go without his seeing you."

On accompanying Miss Margaret to her

nephew's room, the sisters could not but be struck and distressed by the alteration for the worse which one feverish and restless night had caused in his appearance; it seemed to denote such a precarious degree of bodily weakness. They found him reclining on the couch by the fire, pale, languid, and evidently unfit for the slightest exertion; and the hand with which he clasped that of Beatrice, as she sat down by his side, felt burning hot. Not much conversation passed between them, but the gaze of earnest affection with which William fixed his eyes on her's, at once told him all she was feeling, and expressed his own gentle and brotherly sympathy with all. They parted with a few words of kind farewell; but as Helen turned to follow Miss Margaret from the room, William, still holding the hand of Beatrice clasped in his, detained her for a minute behind.

"We may not perhaps meet again," said he in a low voice. "It is not improbable, I fear, that I may be ordered southward sooner than I expected, and you will be engaged at home. I know *how*; and believe me, I do most deeply sympathise in your present feelings, dearest Miss Lockhart."

Beatrice could not restrain her tears. "You

are very, *very* kind, dear Mr. Bertram!" she exclaimed. "How it grieves me to find you so ill to-day."

"I am not very ill," he replied with a smile. "I hope to regain more strength by-and-bye, for the sake of many who are dear to me, and to whom I may perhaps be of use, if I live. I grieve to part with you thus; it is a painful termination to a very happy time. Try to keep up your heart. And if this be our only leave-taking for the present, do not forget me."

"*Forget you!*" exclaimed Beatrice. It was all she could articulate.

"Remember me," said William, "as one who regards you with the most sincere affection, and would give much—very much,—to see you happy. I did not mean to agitate you so painfully," he added, after a minute's pause; "forgive my having done so, dear Miss Lockhart."

"Forgive *me*," replied Beatrice, checking her tears; "it is very wrong in me to give way so foolishly,—but, but—the news from home——. And I cannot bear to say farewell to any one."

"Nor I," said William. "And yet I have

said some long—long farewells,—and may have more to say. But it is a word unknown beyond this fading world—this land of partings. Try to remember that, and so to use the things of time as to remember it with comfort. And now I must not detain you, dearest Miss Lockhart. May God bless and guide you!”

He clasped her hand between both his, and pressed it to his lips; then, as he sank back on the couch, Beatrice left him, and “went her way, weeping as she went.” At the door she turned round for one moment, and cast one last look back at the room and its occupant.

“When, and how,” she asked herself, “shall we meet again?”

In about an hour after this time, the sisters found themselves at the door of their grandmother’s house, and in a few minutes after clasped in the tearful embrace of their Aunt Grace; who, in an old blue cap, and a gown of the same colour, which had seen service, issued like a very Niobe into the lobby, at the sound of the carriage-wheels.

“Your papa, my dears,” she whispered, “and Mrs. Lockhart, and the little girl, are to be here this very night. There must have been some mistake about his letter. It is

dated several days back, and ought to have been here on Tuesday instead of last night ; and this short notice has put us all into great confusion."

Well might Miss Grace say so ! The confusion which prevailed was such, that in the graphic language of Lowry Mac Fyke, who received a dozen contradictory orders in a breath, as soon as he arrived, "a body micht hae steered it wi' a stick !" In order that all due honour might be done to the lately married lady, great preparations had been set on foot at peep of dawn that day. The best bed-room, which had not been occupied since a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Lockhart Clephane, the previous summer, had been opened, and was in process of being aired and put in order ; similar operations were going on in the dining and drawing-rooms, which, to the total subversion of all the established habits of the household, it was decreed should be brought into daily use on this solemn occasion. Moreover, a sheep and sundry denizens of the poultry-yard had been sacrificed in the cause that morning ; there was a prodigious baking of pastry, and other culinary mysteries of high art proceeding below-stairs ; and a disinterring of glass and china

from the store-room, presided over by Miss Willie, in her grimmest and sourest mood. The old lady, alert, active, and unsparing of herself or others, pervaded, as it were, the whole turmoil, and directed all; Miss Winter had been entrusted with the task of dusting the old-fashioned china ornaments in the drawing-room; and Miss Grace, who was not considered worthy any office involving responsibility, revolved like a comet or a troubled spirit, in an irregular orbit, comprehending the whole house, and occasionally relieved her heart by a burst of tears; taking care, however, to keep those demonstrations of feeling concealed from the eyes of her mother and sister.

Beatrice would not unwillingly have joined in the tears, but for the restless aching at her heart, which would not thus dissolve itself. Determined, if possible, to receive her father and his wife cheerfully, she did her best to conquer the miserable feelings with which she had left Kingsconnell, and to exhort Helen to fortitude; and meekly went to present herself and the latter before the old lady, and inquire if either of them could be of any use. The offer being rejected in that quarter, they re-

paired to the presence of Miss Willie, in order to repeat it there.

The scene of Miss Willie's present labours was, as we have said, the store-room,—a long, narrow, and rather dark apartment, at the end of a passage which communicated with the kitchen. Here her nieces found her, elevated upon a wooden chair, in act of removing from a shelf sundry articles pertaining to the table-service, which a maid-servant with bare arms and *kilted* petticoats, stood beneath to receive from her hands.

"Can Helen and I be of any use, Aunt Willie?" asked Beatrice as they entered. "Do let us help you."

Miss Willie looked spitefully round. "Pretty figures you and Helen are, to come and help me; with your best chintz frocks on!" was the only response she deigned to the offer.

"We'll tuck them up in a moment, Aunt Willie," exclaimed Helen.

"Thank you!" quoth Miss Willie. "There's quite enough washing to do already for you both, without your getting those frocks all over dust and dirt; more than *your* work would be worth, I'm sure."

"But we can go and take off these frocks,

Aunt Willie," persisted Beatrice, "and put on our old gingham. You know we dressed at Kingsconnell this morning, not knowing that we should come home to-day. Come, Helen, let us be of some use."

"You need make no changes in your dress to help me," responded Miss Willie, majestically descending from her chair. "I've done. That's the last of them, Grizzy. Come back and get the sheets out to air, and then that will be all."

"And you will not allow us to help you, then?" once more inquired Beatrice.

"I require no help," was the ungracious reply. "It is quite enough hardship for such gay young ladies to be sent for home from Kingsconnell, without finding yourselves set to do anything useful on your arrival."

An indignant retort was rising to the lips of her niece, but she checked it in time, and, with a glance at Helen, retired from the face of Miss Willie; all the bitterest elements of whose nature had been called into action by the unexpected announcement of an arrival so little desired, and the bustle consequent thereupon.

"And then," exclaimed Helen, when the sisters found themselves in their own room,

“and then Aunt Willie and grandmamma reproach us for being useless, knowing nothing of housekeeping, — caring for nothing but books, and so forth, when they will not allow us to learn anything of the kind, or receive an honest offer to do what we can without jibes and cross words !”

“Yes,” said Beatrice, “it would have been very different if—— ! Do you recollect, Helen, when I used to keep house, long ago, in our own dear home ? How much better, how much more useful, I was then than I am now ? But we must not talk of that to-day. It will not do. Let us unpack and put away all our things, and then go to the garden and get some flowers, and try if we cannot make the drawing-room a little comfortable, since we are permitted to do nothing else.”

To the garden, after their other arrangements had been completed, the sisters accordingly repaired ; and wandered up and down its walks, in search of the few surviving flowers of autumn, wherewith to decorate the formal drawing-room, and also to enliven their own little sanctuary ; and thanks to its warm and sheltered situation and the mildness of the weather, they succeeded in finding a great

many, which Beatrice, having brought out the jars and glasses she intended to fill, sat down on the stone-seat upon the terrace to arrange, with Helen's tasteful assistance.

Here they were presently surprised by Walter Sempill, who had come across through the woods, on foot, and whose rapid step, ascending the espalier walk, caused poor Beatrice a painful start, and more painful disappointment. He had come to say good-bye, as it was term-time at Oxford, and he was to depart on the morrow. Philip was already gone. The youth expressed in warm terms his satisfaction at finding the sisters returned home; he had not expected it, and merely came, as much in compliance with the kindly feelings which he had largely inherited from his father's race, as in order to satisfy his grandmother, to bid farewell to Mrs. Lockhart and her daughters, intending to ride over to Kingsconnell in the afternoon. Thither, he said, of course he must still go; but there was more ease and freedom in bidding the young ladies good-bye here, than there would have been there; and he sat down by them on the stone-seat, and talked in his usual gay and rattling strain for a considerable time, then unwillingly confessed that he must

go and pay his respects to the ladies in-doors, and take leave. Beatrice sent her sister in with him, and remained herself behind, on the pretext of her occupation ; but the arrangement of the flowers made slow progress, compared with the rapid thronging of her sad and troubled thoughts.

“I think,” she said to herself, “that Walter admires Helen very much. Aunt Grace evidently thinks so ; but perhaps it would be better if she did not talk of those things to us as she does. She means it kindly, but I never feel the better for it. It seems to me an outrage upon the sacredness of love ; and I fear—I fear, it leads me to dwell more upon some thoughts than I ought to do. Helen is more of a child ; or rather, a girl. I am sure she will love Walter as she grows older, and somehow, I think it is a species of true love whose course *will* run smooth, in spite of Shakespeare. God grant it may ! My own little darling ! her young life has been so saddened—so harshly and ungently dealt with ! She has known so few of the enjoyments of her age and station ; met with so little kindness ! She has grown up like an untended flower ; and I know—I know, dearly

as I love her, that I might have fulfilled mamma's dying trust better than I have done. I have been too much absorbed in one feeling, too much turned-in upon myself, as it were ; I have dreamt too much,—I do dream too much, to take a faithful charge of Helen. How can I watch over her thoughts when my own need so much watching ? It is very wrong. I think too much of Arthur—more than I ought to do. It interferes with my duty to my sister, and I feel as if I were destined to suffer for it."

Her large, sad, tearful eyes were raised, as these thoughts passed through her mind, to the outline of the tree-tops below the garden, scarcely stirred as they were by the gentlest of breezes, which was quite unfelt beneath ; and with the sight of them came vividly upon her recollection the picture of an evening later in the autumn, six long years ago, when almost from the same spot she had watched those tree-tops waving against a back-ground of troubled sky, and when a dark augury for the future had forced itself upon her at the sight.

"It was too speedily verified !" she said, "in part at least. How much still remains to be so,

who can tell? I do not know how it is, but in my own despite, a feeling,—a presentiment, perhaps,—of sorrow, trouble, *fatality*, connects itself in my mind with the thought of Arthur Bertram. Something there may be in that mysterious story,—something in that picture, which has haunted me ever since I saw it, and long before I ever saw him. But if mamma had lived, I know, I am very sure that I should never have been allowed to see so much of him, and still less in the way that I have done. Yet, could I wish it otherwise? No, no, I could not. Happen what may, never can I look back to my intimacy with him but as a dream of happiness only too perfect. What would my life here have been without him? What do I not owe to his society? And yet my own mamma would have thought, as I am sometimes forced to think, that it was ‘a blessing never meant for me.’ What am I, how am I situated, that Arthur Bertram should love me? Beautiful, noble, highly-bred, and highly-connected as he is,—about to enter into a world where he will be surrounded by beauty and fascination, how little is it to be expected that he should continue to remember me? He *does* care for me at present, I do think he does; and I think

his dear, dear brother William would encourage the feeling ; but he is going away. Arthur said once that William was his better angel ; and *I* almost feel as if all the happiness I have lately enjoyed must depart with him. And so indeed it must. It is all over ; for Arthur will soon go too. That happy, happy period at Kingsconnell was too probably only

‘The torrent’s smoothness ere it dash below !’ ”

Thus reflected Beatrice, with all the mournful prescience, the sad “*vorsichtigkeit*,” which so often seems the undesirable prerogative of genius. With all its unconsciousness of power, and all its self-depreciation too. She needed the very reverse of the situation in which she was placed ; something to give her consequence in her own eyes ; some one to tell her that let Arthur Bertram be what he might, the treasure of her young heart’s first affections,—the priceless worth of her virgin purity, her refined and cultivated mind, her loveliness and her rare abilities, were well worth all, and more than all, that he could offer in return. But such knowledge comes not intuitively to characters like her’s. Still she sat, her hands mechanically employed upon the flowers ;

her thoughts more busy far,—now meditating on Walter, now on Arthur ; now contrasting the frank, kindly spirit, in which the former invariably had striven to pay respect to her relations, however unattractive, with the fastidious refinement which had so evidently led the latter to shrink from coming in contact with them, and to seek her society only in private ; and then again reproaching herself for the involuntary feeling, and reflecting how impossible it must be for Arthur, educated as he had been, to tolerate the coarseness of which she herself was so painfully conscious. Amid these, and similar meditations, the bouquets were completed, and Walter returned and made his *adieux*, while Helen's soft dark eyes, brimful of tears, followed his retreating figure down the garden-walk. Then, tenderly kissing her young sister, Beatrice claimed her help in carrying the flower-jars into the house. They strove, in so far as it was possible without the appearance of innovation, to give the drawing-room a more inhabitable aspect ; then retired to arrange their books, music, &c. in the school-room, and after that to dress for dinner, and in awful expectation to await the arrival of their father.

CHAPTER XII.

Mascarille—"Pour moi, je tiens que, hors de Paris, il n'y
a point de salut pour les honnêtes gens."

Cathos—"C'est une vérité incontestable."

LES PRÉCIEUSES RIDICULES.

"Was ever match clapped-up so suddenly?"

TAMING OF THE SHREW.

THE family-party was assembled in the drawing-room; six o'clock, to which unwonted hour dinner had been deferred, had struck, and yet there were no tidings of the travellers. Old Mrs. Lockhart, her soul every instant becoming darker on account of her dinner, and its probable fate under this delay, was seated near the fire, in a position of as little bodily as mental comfort; for the shallow, old-fashioned elbow-chair which she occupied by no means atoned for the absence of her parlour-friend, the fauteuil of black horse-hair, which was not so moveable as her knitting-basket. Miss Willie, attired in a greenish-grey poplin, than

which the wide world might have been challenged to produce anything more outrageously unbecoming, and a lofty and projecting cap, whose white ribbons seemed to nod defiance from her brow, looked the very model of stern unimpeachable sense, and conscious excellence; and sat in an attitude denoting a spirit above being moved by sublunary things, employed in hemming some portion of those articles of dress, which in a former chapter we left her and Miss Winter engaged in cutting out. The latter lady, with a consideration scarcely to be expected from her character, feeling that her presence on this first evening might be some restraint upon the party, had gone to spend the afternoon with Miss Babie Chisholm. As to Miss Grace, she, in her usual livery of blue, and far too much agitated to sit still, or pursue any occupation, had not ceased for an hour past to perambulate the lower part of the house; now entering the dining-room to look at the table, all covered as it was, and ready; now the parlour, to gaze down the avenue from the front window, and anon returning to the drawing-room, to announce, like sister Anne, that she saw nobody coming. Beatrice and Helen, both looking pale and uneasy, sat very still and

silent in one of the windows farthest removed from their grandmother and aunt, each with a book in her hand, of which it were hard to say how little she had read or comprehended since she took it up.

Suddenly Miss Grace flung the door wide, and breathlessly exclaimed that the chaise was in the avenue! Both sisters became even paler than before; and all the party hastily arose, and as the wheels ground upon the gravel, and the door-bell rang loudly, proceeded into the lobby. The door was flung open, and disclosed the figure of Captain Lockhart, standing at the open chaise-door, whilst a smart, dressy maid, with a band-box in her hand, was just getting down from the driving-seat. He lifted out a little girl, about ten years old, elaborately ringletted, her long curls descending to her waist from beneath a round straw hat, trimmed with a wreath of roses; her remarkably short, light-green silk frock displaying white trowsers, frilled and flounced almost to the knee. This little maiden was followed by a lady, to whom her husband silently offered his arm, and leading the child in the other hand, ascended the steps, and presented her to his mother and sisters as his wife; then, while

they mutually embraced, the father turned to his pale and trembling daughters, and clasped them in his arms.

A dimness had seemed to come over the eyes of Beatrice at the first sight of her father and his wife, and she could not distinguish any particular of the lady's appearance, except that her face was covered by a white lace veil. But now Captain Lockhart drew his daughters gently forward.

"Beatrice and Helen, my dears," he said in a low and husky voice, "let me hope that you will learn to love this lady. Mary Anne, my love, allow me to present my girls to you."

"Delighted to see you, my dears! I have no doubt we shall be vast friends by-and-bye," was the response, in a high-pitched English accent; and as the speaker, without a shade of constraint, or appearance of agitation, kissed them both, and introduced them as her "nice new sisters," to her little daughter, Anna Maria Lorton, both felt their first almost overwhelming emotion driven back upon their own hearts, and became capable of noting with some minuteness the outward aspect of their step-mother.

The new Mrs. Henry Lockhart was a little woman, considerably shorter than either of her

step-daughters, but slightly-made in proportion, with a remarkably slender waist, and pretty feet, of which appendages her far from inconveniently-long garments proclaimed her quite conscious. A profusion of long and very light-coloured ringlets depended from beneath her elegant white chip bonnet, and shaded a countenance which at first sight, combined with her youthful figure, conveyed the idea of extreme juvenility, and of an almost doll-like absence of all expression, save that of good-humour. But a farther and more intimate acquaintance with the face did away with all these impressions. It was by no means so youthful upon closer inspection ; her age might in reality be nine-and-twenty, or thirty, and she looked at times several years more, and at no time less. A complexion darker than her hair, and a bright, but not fine, colour, detracted from the delicacy which ought to have accompanied such an aspect, and eyes of so very light a blue. These were in themselves large and well-shaped, but deficient in eyebrow and eyelash. The nose was straight, and the mouth, displaying a beautiful set of teeth, was small and well-formed, but the lips much too thin to please a physiognomist. All these par-

ticulars, however, were the result of after-observation. The first glance only conveyed to the two girls the idea that their step-mother did not look much older than themselves, that she seemed entirely at her ease, in no way abashed or nervous, and that she was very richly dressed in a lilac silk pelisse, on which the eyes of Miss Willie were fastened in mute astonishment, not unmixed with horror, at such a costume being adopted for travelling.

"Dear! how glad I am to see a fire!" exclaimed the lady, as she entered the drawing-room, advancing towards it, and extending her hands to the blaze. "Harry would not allow me to call it cold, but I say I have never been warm since I entered Scotland."

"I think it has been a lovely day," said Captain Lockhart.

"Perhaps, my dear, you would like a fire in your bed-room?" solemnly inquired Mrs. Lockhart, as if determined to do all due honour to her daughter-in-law.

"Oh! if you please, ma'am, I should be perished without one."

"Grace," said the old lady, "go and tell Grizzy to light it."

Mrs. Henry Lockhart made no motion to

detain Miss Grace, or even to apologise for the trouble she was giving her; and Miss Willie, opening her lips for the second time since the arrival of the party, inquired of her brother if he had had a pleasant journey?

"Very pleasant indeed," replied his lady, answering for him. "I can't say very much for your *Scutch* inns, however; but luckily I did not expect much, so that I was not disappointed; and Anna Mariar was so much diverted to hear all the people talking *Scutch*!"

"Do you think it such a funny language?" asked Helen of the little girl, who stood by her mamma in silence, intently staring at each of the party in turn. The question elicited no reply, beyond a fixed gaze at the speaker.

"Why don't you answer, child? She's very shy," apologetically interposed Mrs. Henry Lockhart. A dead silence followed. Captain Lockhart had walked to the window, and stood gazing out upon the garden; and the remainder of the party continued grouped round the fire, in that uncomfortable state when no one knows exactly what to do or say next; all but old Mrs. Lockhart, who in an agony of spirit on account of her dinner, sat in her elbow-chair, revolving in her own mind how best to recall

her daughter-in-law's attention to the fact that she ought to go and get ready for it. Beatrice, feeling *for* her step-mother all the pain and awkwardness which she would herself have experienced in a similar situation, yet too timid, and too much kept in the back-ground, to dare to come forward to her assistance, stole a glance at her, to see how she was bearing the awful pause ; and was relieved, if not much interested, to perceive that Mrs. Henry Lockhart was occupied in arranging her ringlets in the old-fashioned glass above the chimney-piece ; and that having concluded this operation, she began to shake out her lace-trimmed pocket-handkerchief, and let it fall into graceful folds. At this moment Miss Grace entered, to announce that her sister-in-law's fire was lighted.

"I daresay then," said the latter, "that it is time to be thinking about dressing for dinner."

"My dear, I beg ye'll no fash !" exclaimed the old lady, no longer able to contain her uneasiness.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am ?" returned her daughter-in-law, with a broad stare.

"My mother begs you will not think of dressing," interpreted Miss Willie. "It is late, and dinner is ready."

"Oh no, my dear, never think o' dressing," reiterated the old lady. "Just tak' off your bonnet. We're no dressy fock here."

"Oh dear! I couldn't think of such a thing! I dress every day of my life for dinner! and Anna Mariar must be dressed!" exclaimed the bride, in sublime unconsciousness of the fact most engrossing to Mrs. Lockhart, the detention, namely, of dinner. "Come, my dear, now we've warmed our cold fingers, we'll go and get ready."

Both aunts left the room with their sister-in-law, in order to show her the apartment assigned her; and Captain Lockhart, after inquiring which was his dressing-room, hastily followed, as if unwilling to trust himself alone with his daughters; for the old lady had repaired to the kitchen, to see what measures ought to be adopted with respect to the postponed repast.

Beatrice and Helen remained by the fire in silence. Their eyes met; and at last the former uttered the words—"how different she is to what we expected!"

"Yes," said Helen, "hearing of an Englishwoman, I immediately pictured to myself a person like Lady Bertram, or Lady Mountjoye,

or Mrs. Hampden, or those charming Miss Pagets, whom we have seen at Kingsconnell. But this is not like the same countrywoman with them ! Even the accent is so very different !”

Helen had no time for more ; as just then her grandmother returned to the room, and was followed by Miss Willie, who, taking up her work, assured her mother, with a sardonic smile, that she might make her mind as easy as circumstances permitted, for Mrs. Henry would not be down-stairs these three-quarters of an hour, judging from the toilet preparations which she and her maid were making.

The old lady groaned in spirit, but returned no answer ; the two sisters again applied themselves to their books, and silence resumed her reign over the apartment ; for Miss Grace had remained to assist Mrs. Henry Lockhart in her toilette. At last, after a weary interval, the door was flung open, and the lady, leaning on her husband’s arm, entered in all the pride and pomp of dress, ridiculously unsuitable to a family party ; her not very fair neck *décolleté*, and her arms bare to the utmost latitude permitted by the style of the day ; her pretty foot and ankle, in their becoming silk stocking and

black-satin shoe, fully displayed by the curtailment of her light-blue silk gown, which, from its elaborate array of flounces, looked even shorter than it really was. The only covering of her shoulders was a white lace scarf; and her head had none, save its profusion of long ringlets before, and of interwoven plaits behind. The attire was in itself pretty, and the wearer would by most people have been called so, and yet the general effect was not pleasing, not thoroughly lady-like; there was something too much, something laboured and artificial, which displeased the eye. So felt, rather than expressed to themselves, the two young girls; who, little as they had seen of general society, had had the advantage of observing the best specimens of it at Kingsconnell, and in a quieter way, at Sempilltower; and who were instinctively sensible that their step-mother did not entirely correspond with their preconceived ideas on the subject.

Such, however, was most certainly not the lady's own opinion. Nothing could be more perfect than her evident satisfaction with herself, or the air of superiority with which she was disposed to look down upon everything *Scotch*; nor could anything have surprised her

more than the discovery, if such a discovery could have forced its way to her comprehension, that anything *Scutch* could be found to look down on her. She was followed into the room by Miss Anna Mariar, attired in a thin muslin frock and trowsers, with more than the usual allowance of flounce and frill, a broad pink sash, and shoes to match, a coral necklace, and hair somewhat of the colour of her mother's, curled in a profusion of long ringlets round her head. Miss Grace, whose impressionable fancy was rather struck by the appearance of her new sister-in-law, and who was precisely of that order of mind which is easily imposed on by an assumption of superiority, brought up the rear of the party, vainly as good-naturedly endeavouring to elicit some words beyond "yes, ma'am," "no ma'am," from the little girl, each monosyllabic answer accompanied by a broad stare from a pair of large light blue eyes.

"Just take your wife in to dinner, Harry," quoth the old lady as they entered. "It's on the table, and I wish it may be eatable."

"I am very sorry we have kept you waiting so long, ma'am," said her son, preparing to obey her.

"Oh! it's nae great matter," replied Mrs. Lockhart. "The loss is yer ain, if a gude dinner's spoilt. But, my dear Mem.," addressing her daughter-in-law, "it was no worth while to put on that fine goon for a family-dinner. Ye should keep your braws for braw company. We're plain fock here."

"I told Mary Anne," said Captain Lockhart, for his lady was evidently somewhat astray as to his mother's meaning, "that it was scarcely worth while to dress; but——"

"Dress? Harry!" returned his lady, "you don't suppose I could do such a thing as to sit down to dinner with a morning gown on? But I assure you, ma'am," turning to her mother-in-law, "that this is quite an every-day dress. I have worn it very often. I chose it on purpose to-day."

"I wonder what her best goons are like, then?" ejaculated the old lady in an undertone to her eldest daughter, as they proceeded to the dining-room. Miss Willie shook her head in grim foreboding silence.

Despite Mrs. Lockhart's fears, the dinner, though a little the worse for its long delay, proved not merely eatable, but very good of its kind, though the younger matron exclaimed in

astonishment at the "queer *Scutch* broth," on being helped to hare-soup ; and on the dessert's being placed on the table, loudly expressed her surprise at seeing such large pears in Scotland ! The meal, if under her auspices a sufficiently talkative, could scarcely be called a sociable one. The silence, and the grave constrained looks of Captain Lockhart, which painfully struck his daughters, and were even manifest to the unrefined perceptions of his mother—cast a damp over the whole party. Miss Willie, who had from the first conceived a mortal aversion to her sister-in-law, sat wrapt, as in a mantle, in self-sufficient taciturnity. The old lady was not in the habit of talking at dinner, save for the purpose of pressing her guests to eat, or to issue many and conflicting orders to the parlour-maid and Lowry Mac Fyke, who on occasions of peculiar solemnity, officiated as butler, and whose mode of waiting at table was somewhat noisy and energetic. The two girls, anxious as they were to conciliate their step-mother, for their father's sake, yet felt chilled and withheld from all their attempts at conversation, by the depressing influence of his silence, and of the mute but watchful gaze which they occasionally caught him bending

upon them. Helen did her best to entertain little Anna Maria, beside whom she was seated, so far as to help her to everything she could be induced to say she should like ; but Beatrice found herself reduced to the post of auditor to the ceaseless flow of talk carried on between her Aunt Grace and the new member of the family. Mrs. Henry Lockhart's powers in that way seemed wonderful. Even Miss Grace, albeit no mean performer, was reduced to edging in a few words now and then, which were scarcely listened to, as the lady ran on in discussions of her late travels on the Continent, her impressions of Scotland, her ideas of dress and fashion, in which she was evidently deeply skilled, her opinions on the subject of education in general, and Anna Maria's in particular, &c., &c., &c. All these topics were run over, or more leisurely dwelt upon, as it appeared less in consequence of the questions or remarks of her companion, than merely to indulge a "strong necessity of—" talking ; but, nevertheless, they proved extremely acceptable to Miss Grace, who was no nice observer ; and the two girls, desirous of viewing their father's wife in as favourable a light as possible, mentally concluded that she seemed very good-

humoured and anxious to please ; and resolved to leave no effort unattempted to meet her friendly feelings half way.

With this view, on the party's returning after dinner to the drawing-room, leaving Captain Lockhart to a solitary meditation over the fire, not unvisited by memories which he now would gladly have laid in oblivion if he could, the sisters placed themselves on each side of their step-mother, as she sat down on a sofa. The old lady, the while, dosed off to sleep as usual, even in her *uneasy* chair ; Miss Willie left the room, and good-natured Miss Grace set to work, to hunt out an old portfolio of caricatures, for behoof of Miss Anna Maria, who now began to unbend a little from her silence, and to ask a surprising number of questions, in a high, shrill, and very provincial, English accent.

While Miss Grace was endeavouring to satisfy her curiosity, Beatrice and Helen began their conversation by some inquiries as to the route by which Mrs. Henry Lockhart had entered Scotland. Was she not struck, they asked, by the beauty of Edinburgh, where she had remained a week ?

Yes, Mrs. Lockhart thought it very pretty,

certainly; but the streets were empty; she never saw such a deserted place. That, her companions remarked, was owing to the season of the year; everybody was out of town. It might be so,—Mrs. Lockhart did not know; but Brighton, where she had generally lived, was very different. She was very fond of Brighton. Her mamma lived there. She had left Anna Maria at school there during her absence on the Continent.

“Did she like school?” asked Helen. “Did she not feel the separation from her mamma very much?”

“I don’t know,” was the reply. “She missed her grand’ma more than me; she had been more with her. Mamma always said I was too young and thoughtless to take charge of a child. Indeed, mamma made such a pet of me, she would have done any thing for me. I was her great object in life, she said.”

“What a blessed thing!” exclaimed Beatrice, “to have such an affectionate mother! Then you were an only child?”

“Oh dear no!” replied the lady. “There are two brothers between me and Agatha. My sister;”—in answer to an inquiring look from the girls. “Charles is in India, and

Philip at sea. He went to sea at first with my poor dear first husband, Captain Lorton."

"And your sister?" asked Helen.

"She's at home with mamma. But dear mamma always said, somehow, she could never feel for Agatha what she had felt for me. No other daughter, she said, could ever take the same place in her heart that I had done. Agatha does not greatly interest people. She's reserved and shy. Mamma always said I was like a sunbeam in the house."

"And have you lived with your mamma of late, Mrs. Lockhart?—till,—before——" asked Beatrice hesitatingly.

"Till I married your papa?" supplied the lady. "Yes, sometimes. After poor dear Lorton died, I stopped for a while with mamma. Then I had some cousins at Che'tenham, and I took a house there for a while to be near them; and left Anna Mariar with mamma. Poor dear Lorton left me a little something, and I didn't see why I should'nt be independent, and enjoy myself; so I jaunted about a little. It was at Southampton I first met your papa. How glad I am, dear," she added, suddenly interrupting herself, "that you don't think it necessary to

call me mamma! I was quite afraid you would."

"Thank you," said Beatrice, colouring deeply, whilst her eyes filled with tears, and in her warm-hearted simplicity imagining that her step-mother was really desirous of sparing her's and Helen's feelings; "thank you,—you are very kind. We thought you would not expect us to do so, knowing that——"

"Expect you! oh! my dear, I should have died of it! Why, I declare I don't think I look much older than you do? It even seems ridiculous that Anna Maria should call me mamma. But I was married a mere baby, a child from the nursery. Poor dear Lorton was much older than I was. There are his nieces, the Cowleys; nice girls, about your ages. I always make them call me Mary Anne. I could not stand being *aunt* to such great girls."

Beatrice did not quite know what to say next. She felt puzzled and perplexed, with a species of character which had never before come under her notice; but perseveringly proceeded to try various topics of conversation, with a view to eliciting the particular tastes

and predilections of her new connexion. She attempted the subject of music; but after Mrs. Henry Lockhart had assured her that she herself doated on music, had repeated all the encomiums lavished on her playing and singing by her masters and her mamma, and had averred that Agatha had neither her ear nor finger, according to the same authorities, she had nothing more to say upon that theme. Books, it appeared, were equally hopeless, though she declared that at school her own progress in *hist'ry* and in science had astonished her teachers, and that Agatha had by no means made the same proficiency. But it was very evident that she was no reader. Of country pursuits, flowers, animals, sketching, walking, scenery, she as evidently knew, and desired to know, very little. Her existence seemed to have been entirely one of towns and watering-places, and the language and ideas of such places were as little known to her step-daughters as theirs to her. Nor did she seem to feel the slightest interest in those with whom she was now brought into such intimate fellowship, nor evince any desire to know them, and understand their ways better. When Beatrice, from a simple wish to do as she

would have been done by in a similar case, and afterwards Miss Grace, in the fullness of her kindly, gossiping heart, made several attempts to give her some idea of the people, and the habits of life around her new home, it was manifest, by the wandering of her large light eyes, and the irrelevant answers which she returned, that her attention was not caught, or could not be retained, by subjects so extraneous to herself. And yet, with a *naïve* egotism, which the two girls at first set down for simplicity of character, she poured forth every trifling detail of her own life, and her own family, as if they must have been the most engrossing of all topics to her audience. Both felt at fault; and both, in a short time, more weary than can be conceived by any but those who have vainly attempted to interest, and to be interested in, an egotist. Helen, at last, thankfully hailed the relief afforded by little Anna Maria, who, now recovering from her fit of shyness, and appearing in her natural character of a forward romp, entreated her to take her to the school-room, as she was tired of the drawing-room and the caricatures. While Beatrice, after requesting Mrs. Henry Lockhart to favour them with a little music, and receiving a nega-

tive, on the score of being out of practice, and all her music being up-stairs and not unpacked, thought that she might venture to leave the field to her Aunt Grace; and taking up some work, placed herself near the tea-table, and on the side next the door, in hopes that when her father entered the room, he might draw his chair near her's, and talk with her a little, as in old times he would have done.

But the hope proved vain. When Captain Lockhart did enter the room, he resisted his daughter's pleading look, and her gentle attempt to engage him in conversation; and after taking a cup of tea from his sister Willie, and drinking it standing, retreated to a corner of the old-fashioned settee near the fire, and was speedily absorbed in a newspaper. His daughters remarked that Anna Maria, on her return to the room, approached him with a familiarity which they durst no longer assume; and was even troublesome and disagreeable in peeping over his shoulder, pulling his hair, and climbing on his knee, in a fashion ill-suiting her age, without eliciting any farther reproof than a playful tap on the cheek, or an admonition of "get along, little puss!" But they felt chilled, disheartened, and abashed

from all possibility of making any advances to him; and were only too happy when the seemingly-endless evening was terminated by the bell ringing for prayers; a ceremonial, by the way, which in itself, or in the mode of its conduct at the Grange, seemed mightily to puzzle Mrs. Henry Lockhart.

"What," she inquired, almost before the servants had left the room, "do people always have these sort of prayers in Scotland? Do they pray standing up?"

Miss Willie, her displeasure at her sister-in-law gaining tenfold strength from this ill-advised criticism, returned a sullen answer, purporting that such was the usage of the Scottish Church, and of all who properly respected its observances.

"Well, I never!" exclaimed the bride. "But then," turning to Beatrice and Helen, "didn't I see *you* kneeling, girls? How was that?"

"We do not belong to the Scottish Church. We are Episcopalians, like yourself," replied Beatrice in a low voice, *feeling*, though she did not venture to look in her direction, the malignant glance and smile of her Aunt Willie at the words.

"La! is it possible? Were you not brought-up in Scotland?"

"Yes, certainly. We have never been out of it, except once, for a few weeks."

"You don't mean to say that there are Episcopalians in Scotland?" exclaimed Mrs. Lockhart in unaffected amazement.

"My dear Mary Anne!" ejaculated her husband, horror-struck at such an amount of ignorance, "*you* don't mean to say that you did not know that?"

"Why, how *should* I know it, Harry? What do I know about you Scutch people?" returned his lady in huge disdain. "You are the first Scutchman I ever met with in my life! I thought you were all Dissenters, every one of you."

"Pardon me, Mrs. Henry," interposed Miss Willie, her head involuntarily trembling, and her frame dilating, as it were, with indignation at this unfortunate speech, "pardon me, we are no *Dissenters*. We belong to the Established Church. It is you Episcopalians, if you please, who are Dissenters in Scotland."

"Well, well, we shan't dispute that point to-night," hastily said Captain Lockhart, who retained a vivid recollection of his sister's

acerbity on the subject so unluckily broached. "There's Anna Maria dead asleep, my dear."

"Wake up, child, and go and get Ellis to put you to bed," said the mamma, raising the little girl from her slumber in a chair. "Really I have no idear, as dear mamma says, how to take care of a child. Thank you, Helen, my dear; it is very good of you to take her away. But now, tell me, Beatrice,—you don't mean to say that you have any Bishops in Scotland?"

"Oh! that they have," exclaimed Miss Willie. "To be sure they have Bishops, and Priests, and all the other paraphernalia, in a small way. A nice set they are too! Not bad friends to his Holiness the Pope, if the truth were known!"

"Oh, fie! I don't at all approve of Popery!" said Mrs. Henry Lockhart, in a highly moral and Protestant tone, as the party proceeded along the passage on their way back to the drawing-room, prayers having been read in the dining-parlour.

"But," whispered Beatrice to her, "you must not listen to what Aunt Willie says on that subject, for I assure you she is prejudiced;

and that she never made a more mistaken assertion than that in her life."

Receiving no answer for a minute, Beatrice flattered herself that her step-mother was giving the theme some serious consideration; an idea speedily dissipated by the questions which followed this silence.

"Do you think there is a chance of many visitors to-morrow? Have you many morning visitors? Should you advise me to put on my lilac silk, or my pale blue cashmere?"

"Oh! Beatrice, dear, what a long, weary day this has been!" exclaimed Helen, as the sisters found themselves at last in their own apartment. "I never, never was so tired, I think."

"Nor I, Helen," returned Beatrice, in a tone of utter depression. "Can it be possible that this day began at Kingsconnell? began with such feelings of happiness,—such lovely recollections of yesterday?"

"Yesterday? It seems a century ago! Was it only this forenoon that Walter came to say good-bye? Dear, dear! how much one may live through in a day! I won't ask you yet, Beatrice, what you think of——of——"

"No, dearest, it is better not. I don't want to think, or to pass rash judgments;—

above all on papa's wife. I want to like her. She seems very good-humoured."

"But, Beatrice, does not the very idea of going to live with her in some of those English towns, make you tremble? And I don't think she would like to live in Scotland, from all she says."

"Don't mention it, Helen!" exclaimed Beatrice shuddering. "Do not let us present such a probability to our own minds. The very thought of such a life, in that second-rate provincial society,—the——oh! darling Helen! don't let us picture it to ourselves! Time enough when it comes! 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.'"

And the sisters proceeded to undress. But long after Helen had retired to bed and fallen asleep, did Beatrice sit in her usual seat by the table,—all thoughts of present trouble dismissed from her mind, with the "Christian Year," in her hand, and, alas! her whole soul absorbed in a dream of Arthur Bertram.

CHAPTER XIII.

As frost to the bud, and blight to the blossom, even such is
self-interest to friendship;
For confidence cannot dwell where selfishness is porter at the
gate.

PROVERBIAL PHILOSOPHY.

A FORTNIGHT elapsed, during which our heroine's intercourse with Kingsconnell was limited to one or two notes from Emily, and one brief interview with Arthur, soon after his return with his mother; when she and Helen, walking back from a morning visit to Sempilltower, had met him riding on the road, and when he alighted from his horse, and walked by their sides as far as their paths lay together. On this occasion Arthur seemed desponding and unhappy on account of his brother, who was to begin his journey southward on the next day; and when, after dwelling on the blank which

William's departure would cause, he alluded to his own, now drawing near,—his companion felt as if she “longed to steal away and weep.”

All things, in short, looked black to poor Beatrice then, notwithstanding that the family party at the Grange was involved in a round of company abroad and at home, very different from its ordinary sober habits. But every day a heavier weight seemed to lie on her spirit, as every day brought added conviction that her step-mother and she could never be more to each other than they were at first. In the fullness of a warm girlish heart, whose tenderness had been so much flung back upon itself, Beatrice had longed to find a friend in her; but after many efforts at self-deception, she was forced to admit that the thing was impossible. There was no *rapproch* between them, nor had Mrs. Henry Lockhart the slightest wish to become the friend of her step-daughters. So all-pervading was her egotism, and so perfect her belief in herself, that all she wanted was a good listener. A friend, who would have given her confidences in return for her's, would have been an absolute bore to her. The impression of simplicity and ingenuousness which her conversation had at first given the two girls, was

not long in wearing-out, as her character began more clearly to unfold itself to them ; and after a long morning's listening, the only feeling which they carried away from her discourse, was, as they confessed to each other, one of strong pity for that much-vituperated Agatha, whose sins and short-comings, as contrasted with her own perfections, afforded so constant a theme to Mrs. Lockhart.

"I declare," Helen would say. "I think poor Agatha is very ill-treated. I have no doubt she is by far the more interesting of the two."

Both sisters, but especially Beatrice, had much of that keen perception of the ridiculous, and enjoyment of it, which is an indispensable ingredient in a mind of high imaginative and intellectual powers ; and had Mrs. Henry Lockhart been any one else, they would have found her a new and most amusing study in character. Even as it was, to avoid this feeling in some degree, was impossible ; but it was never indulged in by either, without being mingled with self-reproach, at suffering such ideas to arise in their minds, regarding the wife of their father. Besides this, many things, many little shades of character, and involuntary betrayals

of temper, which would have amused in an indifferent person, assumed a very different aspect as proceeding from one who must inevitably exercise so much influence on their future fate. Mrs. Henry Lockhart had at first treated both with perfect good-humour, and in a spirit of as much friendliness as was consistent with complete indifference; but a change became perceptible in her manner, more especially towards Beatrice, after they had dined out once or twice in company, at various houses in the neighbourhood. Helen, on account of her youth, did not accompany the party to any other place than Sempilltower; and Miss Grace was usually the member of the family who completed the quartette which the carriage could convey. Gradually, as the newly-married lady became aware, partly from the observations forced upon herself, partly from the indiscreet raptures of poor Aunt Grace respecting her beloved niece, that Beatrice was greatly admired in society, and that the attractions of her face were even exceeded by those of her manner and conversation, a feeling of jealousy took possession of her whole nature, and displayed itself in a variety of small manifestations, at first incomprehensible to her step-daughter,

and of whose motives the species of lofty simplicity which characterized her, and rendered the perception of anything mean or paltry scarcely possible to her mind, kept her in ignorance which could not have existed in a character of an inferior stamp. To find any one else admired when she was present, was a thing for which Mrs. Henry Lockhart was not prepared, at least for having such an unwelcome fact forced upon her by the remarks of another. Accustomed throughout her life to find, or fancy, herself, a first object with all around her, she had come amongst her husband's "Scutch relations" with the pre-assurance of appearing to them as something whose like they had never seen before; and what with the influence of her personal charms, on which she set an extravagant value, and that of her various and expensive dress, had reckoned on nothing short of universal admiration. It may therefore be conceived how little she relished being compelled to observe that by many people she was regarded in a secondary light to her husband's daughter, a girl so much younger than herself, who had never been out of Scotland, and who had no advantages of dress beyond those afforded by good taste in arranging scanty

materials. It was alike painful and puzzling to Beatrice to remark the gradual alteration in her manner under the influence of these discoveries ; and the mode in which she contrived to give vent to little disparaging speeches and cutting innuendoes, levelled against his eldest daughter, in presence of her husband ; and which, though apparently unnoticed at the time, could not fail to produce their own effect,—to leave some portion of their sting behind. With her usual habit of self-depreciation, Beatrice at first concluded that there must have been some offence, real or imaginary, on her part, and wearied herself in fruitless efforts to discover it ; but by degrees the truth began to dawn upon her, that her step-mother disliked both her and Helen, but her above all ; and although she was far from exactly divining why, there are few things more painful to a young and affectionate heart than the sense of unmerited dislike ; and few things could be more depressing, to one whose deficient self-esteem rendered the stimulus of love and approbation necessary to enable her to assume her own position, and put forth her own powers.

Of those who came forward to show attention to Captain Lockhart and his wife, Miss

Violet Alexander considered it due to herself to be amongst the foremost; and her formal morning visit was speedily followed by as formal an invitation to dinner, which included the whole party, save Helen; for Miss Violet was too rigid an observer of the proprieties of life to sanction a young lady of sixteen going out to dinner. Miss Grace, as usual, was the only elder individual of the household who accepted. It was with bitter reluctance, and more bitter pain, that Beatrice found herself compelled to join a party, given by her mother's old relative to her step-mother, nor could she help guessing that her father, could he have found a plausible pretext for declining the invitation, would gladly have done so. There could be nothing but pain, and, though he might not avow it to himself, mortification, for him in accepting it. As to Miss Violet herself, Beatrice gave her credit for more feeling than she possessed, in supposing that it must be most painful to her to receive the successor of her mother in her house. Had Captain Lockhart married a woman of birth and high-breeding, Miss Violet would have felt pride in showing how very far she was from any illiberal feeling towards her, and in proving to her that *her* young cousins

had at least one relation of whom they need not be ashamed. As it was, her own good-breeding speedily enabling her to discover the want of it in Mrs. Lockhart, the discovery only added another stone to the cairn of her dislike to the whole family; and perhaps served in some measure to soften her feelings towards the children of her cousin; which involuntary softening did Beatrice the good service of saving her from at least half the lecture drawn down upon her head in consequence of her's and Helen's late defections. Otherwise, while Miss Carruthers had wept bitterly before the dinner-party, and shed many more, and more bitter, tears after it, on perceiving the contrast between the late and the present Mrs. Lockhart, Miss Violet maintained, and prided herself on maintaining, the most stoical calmness and composure throughout the day; and evinced no other token of what was passing in her mind, than by taking pains, during the evening, without any abatement of her own cold and stately courtesy of manner, to impress her new connection with a sense of her own inferiority to the far-descended first wife of her husband. The lady was too firmly entrenched within her rampart of self-esteem, to take in the whole of

Miss Violet's meaning; but enough reached her to cause some emotion of mortified vanity, and in consequence to nettle her not a little. Her mortification was still farther increased by a circumstance connected with the party; which, as usual in Miss Violet's house, consisted exclusively of county people, with the solitary exception of Mr. Malcolm. Amongst the guests was one, Mr. Sumner by name, an Englishman, who accompanied a neighbouring family, at whose house he was then on a visit. This gentleman, a grave, reserved, and somewhat distinguished-looking young man, seemed much struck with the appearance of Beatrice, next whom he sat at dinner, and to whom he paid considerable attention during the evening. And scarcely were the Grange party seated in the carriage, on their way home, than Miss Grace, in her usual fashion, began to congratulate her niece upon her conquest.

"I heard Mr. Sumner enquiring your name, Beatrice, and all about you, from Mrs. Hepburn. You have made an impression, depend upon it! I should advise some young gentlemen to look sharp, or they'll find themselves cut out. He is a very fine-looking man; a countryman of your's, Mary Anne."

"Very likely," replied her sister-in-law, with a toss of her head, which the darkness concealed. "I can't say I think him good-looking; but you Scutch people are not so much accustomed to good-looks as we are. That does make a difference, to be sure. I remember being so much surprised to hear that my cousin Phillis was thought a beauty, when she came down to pay a visit to her friends, the Johnsons——"

"Johnstones, Mary Anne, my dear," interposed Captain Lockhart. "We have no Johnstones in Scotland."

"Perhaps not. What do I know of your queer Scutch names?" retorted his lady very sharply. "I mean the people in Dun—Dum—what *do* you call it? *Dumfries*. Phillis was thought a beauty there; but I'm sure nobody ever said so at 'ome. And as to Mr. Sumner, Grace, my dear, don't raise false hopes in Beatrice."

"*Hopes!*" exclaimed Beatrice, rather indignantly. "I really must say——"

"Don't lose your temper, my dear girl," blandly interrupted her step-mother. "I was not going to say much to excite your hopes, so it is as well if they are not high raised. Mr.

Sumner might think you well worth enquiring after at a party like that to-night, but it is no great compliment. *I* did not see a tolerable-looking woman in the company !”

Beatrice made no reply, feeling that she could not do so without violating the respect due to her father’s wife, besides involving herself in a ridiculous dispute ; but she could not help sympathising with the anger which made Miss Grace’s breath come thick and fast, and which her niece feared might break forth in wrathful speech, when Mrs. Lockhart went on talking, and so prevented an explosion. Her subject, chosen with singular good taste, was now Miss Alexander herself ; her old-fashioned house, her dress, and her style of manner, of both which she was too ignorant and underbred to discern the perfect adaptation to her age, character, and position. She then went on to sneer at the “strange, old Scotch rubbish,” of which there was so large a collection, and which she opined “would not fetch five pounds, the whole lot of them, at a sale ;” and to make like honourable mention of “the stupid old stories” with which these relics were connected. It seemed as if she at once desired to give vent to her own spleen, and to

provoke her step-daughter into some reply, which might commit her to her father, as disrespectful to his wife. But in this she was disappointed; for after the first struggle with herself was over, Beatrice found it not very difficult to restrain her naturally high and impatient temper. She had not been schooled to forbearance so many years, by the bitter tongue of her aunt Willie, without having in a measure acquired the self-control in which her gentle mother had, in better days, been wont to lament her deficiency. She, therefore, remained entirely silent under Mrs. Henry Lockhart's tirade; and fortunately for the preservation of peace, her example was followed by her Aunt Grace, who had no particular affection—how could she?—for Miss Alexander; and who, irritated as she felt, was rather sleepy, and so indisposed for disputation.

As for Captain Lockhart, however he might converse with his lady in private, he never addressed much speech to her in presence of his family, so that in the present instance she had all the discourse to herself, and maintained it during the greater part of the drive home,—“a fit conclusion,” as Beatrice

described it to her sister, "of a wretched day."

But now a trial awaited our heroine, exceeding those which her step-mother had as yet caused her; no other than an acceptance by Lady Bertram, her daughter, and her son Arthur, of an invitation to a grand projected dinner-party at the Grange! As yet the Kingsconnell family had seen nothing of Mrs. Henry Lockhart, save at church. They had mutually missed each other in calling; and the absence of Sir Thomas had, as Lady Bertram politely intimated to the bride on being introduced to her the first Sunday when they met, prevented her requesting the pleasure of her company at dinner. The two girls had congratulated each other on this delay of the evil day, and were not prepared for the access of hospitality which seemed at present to have seized their grandmother, and which led to this invitation. Never before had Beatrice dreaded the idea of seeing Emily or Arthur Bertram; but at present she did, and would have given all she possessed to escape the projected festivity. She dreaded, for her father's sake, the thought of Lady Bertram's criticism of his wife; and instinctively

felt that there never was any pleasure for her in meeting either Emily or her brother in company with her grandmother and aunts; that their fastidiousness was revolted by the coarseness around her, and her own self-respect consequently lowered by a sense of degradation. It was not that Beatrice, in her unworldly simplicity and ignorance of actual life, imagined to what a degree, and in what way, these relations were a disadvantage to herself and Helen. She supposed that the same sympathy which she would have felt for another under similar trials, would be extended to them by those who really loved them; but her refined and acutely sensitive nature shrank from the anticipation of ridicule and sarcasm levelled against those she lived among; and the more so that she felt how much they must lay themselves open to both. And of the powers of sarcasm concealed beneath the exquisite polish of Lady Bertram's manner Beatrice was fully aware.

On the arrival of the dreaded day, when—after a morning of the unutterable bustle, confusion, and worry, attendant upon the solemnity of “giving a dinner” at the Grange—she and Helen escaped into the garden, to

search amongst its fading blossoms for the materials of their small bouquets, she felt that she would gladly have fled she knew not whither, to escape the impending evening, now approaching as rapidly as undesirable things always do approach.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Thy gown? Why, aye; come, tailor, let us see't.
Oh mercy, God! what masking stuff is here?
What's this? a sleeve? 'tis like a demi-cannon:
What, up and down? carved like an apple tart?
Here's snip, and nip, and cut, and slish, and slash,
Like to a censer in a barber's shop:
Why what, o' devil's name, tailor, call'st thou this?"

TAMING OF THE SHREW.

LADY BERTRAM, all this while, was preparing for the dinner-party in a mood of mind not much more comfortable than that of Beatrice. We have already said that as yet no suspicion of Arthur's attachment to the latter had reached her mind; but since her return home she had been considerably startled by having accidentally discovered, what her son had given her no hint of, that he had come back to Kingsconnell several days previous to receiving her summons, and previous too to the conclusion of the Misses

Lockharts' visit; and to this discovery additional force was lent by the gossip of her French maid, who had been many years with her lady, and was in consequence a privileged person, and who had various hints and surmises of the servants' hall and housekeeper's room to relate upon the subject, cautiously as Arthur flattered himself that he had managed matters. Enough, in short, was said to excite no small degree of annoyance in Lady Bertram's mind, blended with self-reproach for her own want of prudence in permitting her daughter's girlish intimacy with one whom she could not deny to be a most attractive girl, to continue unchecked as both outgrew the age of girlhood. The bare idea of such a possibility as that of her son's affections being entangled in an obscure attachment, was one which she could not contemplate with patience. Her disappointment in her ambitious hopes for William had been severe, and increased tenfold the anxiety with which she anticipated the future career of Arthur; added to which was the fact, that he had always been the favourite of her heart amongst her children, and the one in whom her brightest aspirations had centered. There was little in the character of her eldest son with which her's

had any affinity. His was of too lofty, ideal, and unworldly a cast, to afford them any points of contact; but the mobile, impressionable, and easily-excited temperament of Arthur, his larger share of fire, ambition, and vanity, and peculiar susceptibility to female influence, rendered it much less difficult to move him in any given direction, for one who possessed the key to his mind. His extraordinary personal attractions, and his rare and highly-cultivated abilities, were all additional incentives to maternal pride, and it would have been difficult to find limits to what Lady Bertram's fancy pictured as the lofty destiny of this favourite of nature. Was it therefore to be endured that these hopes should be frustrated by an agency hitherto so utterly insignificant in her eyes, as to have been overlooked in all her calculations? She could not bring herself to suppose that as yet there was any real danger of this, but resolved to be upon her guard, and without doing anything to startle her son, and so lead him to think more deeply upon the subject, to observe in silence, and draw her own conclusions from what she observed; while for the future she determined quietly and by imperceptible degrees, to withdraw her daughter from the society of

Beatrice Lockhart. She likewise trusted much to the total change of life in which Arthur would so soon find himself involved, to dissipate associations too tender to be desirable. Still it was with a clouded brow that she descended to the drawing-room, her toilette completed, to await the carriage which was to convey herself, her son, and daughter, to the Grange.

The countenance of Arthur, as he flung himself back in the opposite corner of the carriage to his sister, more than reflected the gloom and annoyance which shadowed that of his mother. He was, in fact, looking forward with as little pleasure as poor Beatrice herself to the meeting of that evening, surrounded as he knew he should find her, by all that was most repulsive to the fastidiousness of his own nature; and shrinking, by anticipation, from the comments of his mother and sister, giving utterance to all that he could not but feel, but could not endure to learn that they felt. And whilst Emily ran on in a variety of conjectures regarding her friends' step-mother, with whose appearance at church none of the party had been particularly captivated, he maintained an almost unbroken silence, which, as well as his

aspect, spoke volumes to the awakened watchfulness of Lady Bertram.

The Kingsconnell party were the last to arrive at the scene of action ; and as, leaning on the arm of her son, and followed by her daughter, Lady Bertram glided into the drawing-room, she found a considerable number of guests assembled there. The old Laird and Lady of Sempilltower, although they very seldom now went anywhere from home, unwilling to disappoint their old neighbour, had accepted Mrs. Lockhart's invitation, and joined her party, accompanied by their son ; while Miss Muirhead remained at home to keep company with the Major, whose deafness entirely precluded visiting. Besides them, there were Mr. Carmichael and one or two other rural neighbours. Captain Lockhart and his lady had not yet come down stairs ; but Miss Anna Maria, be-flounced, be-curled, and be-sashed, *à l'outrance*, stood beside Helen, who at the moment of Lady Bertram's entrance was seated on the sofa by Mrs. Sempill, while Beatrice, a little way out of sight, was near one of the windows, talking to another lady. Both sisters advanced after their grandmother and aunts, to greet the newly-arrived visitors,

and Lady Bertram did not fail to remark the sudden mantling of colour on the previously pale cheek of the elder, as she did so, not less than the deep glow which came over the expressive face of Arthur at the same moment. But scarcely were the party seated, when the door again flew open, and Captain Lockhart entered the room, with his lady leaning on his arm, attired in a dress of the palest pink satin, trimmed with splendid lace, and shorn of its proportions at either extremity of her person, to a degree such as few eyes in that assemblage had ever witnessed ; her tiny and liberally-displayed feet and ankles bedight in white satin and silk stockings of cobweb-like fineness of texture ; her elaborate profusion of ringlets confined by a wreath of blush roses, and her neck and wrists encircled by a necklace and bracelets of pink topaz. Such was the figure who now, still retaining her hold of her husband, was by the old lady presented by name to each of the company to whom she had previously been a stranger, and at each introduction performed an elaborate bend and curtsy. This ceremony Mrs. Henry Lockhart had herself insisted upon as indispensable at every one of the parties, whether dinners or tea-drinkings,

given at the Grange in her honour, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the old lady, who denounced it as "daft-like;" and the scarce suppressed sneers of Miss Willie, who imparted to Miss Grace her opinion that "this lady understood better how to manage Harry than the last did; she should have liked to see his face if Beatrice, poor soul, had proposed to him to come in and stand stuck-up in the middle of a room full of company, while she bobbed up and down upon his arm to everybody in turn! but he submitted like a lamb to the process, under Mary Anne's word of command!"

He most assuredly did; whilst his daughters turned away to hide their painful blushes; and Beatrice as she caught the bright sarcastic eye and curling lip of Lady Bertram, directed towards the bride, and contrasted the air of distinction investing her and Emily with the second-rate artificiality of her father's wife, again, and more fervently than ever, renewed her wish that she herself were at that moment in any other place under the sun than the identical one where she found herself. But this sense of bitter mortification was softened in a few minutes after, by the sound of Arthur's

deep low voice, behind the chair at the most distant window, to which she had retreated. Profiting by the obscurity of twilight,—which now began to wrap the apartment, beyond the limited sphere of the two old-fashioned girandoles on the mantel-piece, which were the only lights,—the young man had unobservedly made his way towards her ; and for the space of about twenty minutes after—during which time everybody else was mentally wondering when dinner would be announced, and this period of *ennui* brought to a conclusion ; and during which the impatience of old Mrs. Lockhart at the delay of the announcement amounted to absolute torture, unable as she felt to go and ascertain the cause,—the youthful lovers forgot annoyance, shame, and trouble, in the delight of that murmured conversation, at the extremity of the long narrow room, and protected by the gathering shades of evening. It was too soon at an end ; for at length the door was flung open by Lowry Mac Fyke, with the—to those alone unwelcome—tidings of dinner ; and in a minute after, Arthur heard himself summoned to give his arm to Mrs. Sempill, and found himself, at the dinner-table, placed between her and——Mrs. Henry Lockhart !

Had the fates contrived it on purpose, a party of people more thoroughly misplaced, as regarded their mutual enjoyment, could scarcely have been found. Beatrice, from the opposite side of the table, watched with painful interest the progress made by her step-mother in Arthur Bertram's dislike, through the course of the repast. She observed how, attracted by his appearance, so infinitely superior to that of every one else in company, Mrs. Lockhart kept turning away from Captain Sempill, who had taken her into dinner, scarcely responding to his gentlemanly and kind-hearted endeavours to talk to her, and with a degree of under-bred egotism rarely to be met with, interrupting by a thousand silly *agaceries* the conversation between his mother and her young neighbour at table, in order to force herself upon the notice of the latter, all unobservant of the scarce-concealable annoyance and constraint with which her advances were met and repelled. Next to Beatrice herself, no two people could have noted the species of unfavourable impression made by Mrs. Henry Lockhart, with more heartfelt regret on her step-daughters' account, than the excellent Mrs. Sempill and her son. As Captain Sempill gazed alternately

at his over-dressed, over-perfumed, over-elaborated neighbour, at the two lovely and graceful girls, in their unadorned white muslin dresses, and at the calm, self-possessed, undemonstrative elegance of Lady Bertram and her beautiful daughter,—then glanced at the haughty scorn which wreathed the lip, and spoke in the expressive eye, of her still more beautiful son, his kind heart sank within him, and a thousand anticipations of sorrow and mortification to the young creatures in whom he felt so warm an interest, crowded upon his mind. Nor were matters much amended by the proximity of Lady Bertram to Captain Lockhart, at the foot of the table. Oppressed by feelings which he would not own, even to himself, and tortured by regrets and recollections which his pride would not for worlds have permitted him to disclose, the latter was on this occasion even unusually silent and spiritless. In short, as his mother afterwards indignantly remarked to Miss Willie, “for a’ the gude Harry did at the fit o’ the table, they micht as weel hae had a potatoe-bogle there !” And Lady Bertram was not a person calculated to lead a silent man into conversation. To this her habitual impassive coldness of manner, towards all who

did not rank among her own intimates, presented an insurmountable barrier ; and she was less than ever inclined to exert any powers of pleasing at the present time. "The whole thing," as Captain Sempill afterwards remarked, "was as dull and heavy as a dead march," notwithstanding the elements of graceful cordiality infused into it by the good old Laird and himself, and the incessant talking of Miss Grace to Mr. Carmichael, next whom she was seated, but who was not himself in his brightest or most conversational mood ; for indeed the distress and astonishment with which he had at first beheld the successor of Beatrice's mother, augmented every time he was in her company ; and he felt, on each such occasion, less and less able to understand or forgive Captain Lockhart's marrying her ; and less and less inclined to do anything save watch with silent but intense sympathy, the indications of trouble and mortification to be noted on the expressive countenance of her elder step-daughter.

But triumphantly unconscious of dullness or discrepancy of any kind, deaf and blind to all that did not immediately touch herself, Mrs. Henry Lockhart talked on,—talked through all,

—talked enough for ten, and loud enough for twenty; flattering herself the while that the singularly handsome young man next whom she was seated, must find her conversation a striking contrast to that of the “Scutch girls” around him; which in truth he did, though not exactly as she supposed. When to all these separate sources of annoyance, were added the various small things which mark the difference between a habitually well-appointed table and attendance, and their opposites,—the trifles which betray want of tact, and want of usage, it could not be denied that the *tout ensemble* of the festivity was not calculated to leave a very favourable impression upon any of those who assisted thereat.

Nor did the retreat of the female division to the drawing-room do much to promote an increase of cheerfulness. Lady Bertram, entrenched in one corner of the sofa near the fire, conversed in her own low and quiet tone of voice with Mrs. Sempill, who occupied the other, and bestowed little or no notice upon any one else. And her daughter, although she sat talking by the pianoforte with Beatrice and Helen, and another young lady visitor, appeared to them unlike her usual self. Her manner

was constrained and cold, and altered from the affectionate cordiality which it had exhibited under the influences of her Aunt Margaret and her elder brother. Her two friends, recollecting the warm sympathy which she had expressed in the distress they had felt the day they left Kingsconnell, naturally anticipated some renewal of it at this time, and expected that she should make some remarks, or ask for some information, relative to their experience of their step-mother. But not a syllable escaped Emily, calculated to show that the subject preserved the slightest interest in her eyes. Not even when, at her own request, she accompanied Beatrice to the school-room, to look at some drawings, did she utter a word which could be construed into a desire to give the conversation a confidential turn. There was something altogether chilling and disappointing in her behaviour, which both sisters felt, but Beatrice the most acutely ;—an indefinable desire to place a distance between them, of which they had never before been conscious ; and to their young and inexperienced hearts, confidently reckoning on her sympathy as they had done, the sense of repulse was alike painful and unexpected.

On returning to the drawing-room with her, Beatrice found that Mrs. Henry Lockhart had seated herself upon a chair close by the sofa occupied by Lady Bertram and Mrs. Sempill, and was mingling in their conversation; an end which she had gained through the gentle and even punctilious politeness of the latter; for the former, without departing from her usual perfect good-breeding, gave her very little encouragement. Just as Beatrice approached, her step-mother was appealing to Lady Bertram on some subject, as one on which, she said, "we Englishwomen must feel alike;" and the look,—the calm, wondering, enquiring gaze, which formed her layship's only reply to the presumptuous assumption of equality implied in these words, although a weapon of too fine an edge to pierce the thick coat of vulgar egotism, transfixed an innocent victim—poor Beatrice—with a pang, a thrill, of shame and mortification, such as she had seldom experienced, and never half so intensely, before. All unconscious of this, however, Mrs. Lockhart pursued her discourse, which, it appeared, had turned upon a favourite topic of her's, a comparison between the amount of personal beauty to be met with in England and in Scotland.

"I don't think there's the smallest comparison," she said. "We should never dream, should we," (to Lady Bertram) "in England, of calling people beauties who are called so here? Now I need go no farther than a cousin of mine——" and therewith followed the anecdote of her cousin Phillis, as given in a previous chapter; in the midst of which instructive piece of biography, Arthur Bertram and Mr. Carmichael entered the room, and drew near to the fireplace.

"Come, gentlemen," said Mrs. Sempill, as the narrative came to a close, "do stand up for the honour of old Scotland! Mrs. Henry Lockhart will not allow that we have any beauty amongst us to boast of, compared with her own country."

"No, really, Mrs. Lockhart?" enquired Mr. Carmichael, with a smile. "That is rather a sweeping assertion, is it not?"

"Indeed *I* think so, Mr. Carmichael," interposed Miss Grace, with considerable heat and vehemence.

"Of course *you* think so, Grace, who are a Scutchwoman, and know no better," retorted her sister-in-law. "But to me, I declare it is quite amusing to hear the extravagant opinions

people express of any good looks they meet with here! There are the two girls," (looking towards Beatrice,)—"before I came here, their pa' used quite to rave about them to me! I expected something miraculous in the way of beauty, of course; and I declare, as I wrote to ma' after my arrival, I never was more disappointed in my life!"

A dead silence followed this candid speech. Miss Grace was literally too angry to be able to reply; Mrs. Sempill thoroughly shocked at the rudeness displayed in it. Beatrice felt as if every eye must be fixed upon her, and scarcely dared to raise her face, tingling as it was with a most painful blush; but when she did, she caught one glance, exchanged between Lady Bertram and her son Arthur, which made her wish that she could have fled and hidden herself from them all. She was inexpressibly relieved the next instant by the approach of Lowry Mac-Fyke with coffee for the gentlemen, and by the entrance of Captain Sempill; and Mrs. Henry Lockhart was shortly after drawn off to the pianoforte by the sound of Emily Bertram's splendid voice, which speedily attracted most of the gentlemen to surround the instrument.

"How *can* you sing to that old cracked tub

of a piano, Miss Bertram?" enquired Mrs. Lockhart with an engaging smile, as the young lady concluded her performance.

The good-breeding of Emily was shocked by this speech, uttered in presence of the young ladies of the family, and she rather gravely replied that she found no difficulty in the matter, making way as she spoke for Mrs. Lockhart herself, who, after sundry affected objections, was prevailed upon to take her place, and favour the company with some music. Apparently the silence observed throughout its somewhat tedious length, was not sufficiently profound to satisfy the fair performer, for her eye glanced at times with an expression of displeasure from one offender to another, but more particularly towards Beatrice, beside whom Arthur Bertram was now standing; and both unquestionably conversing, and not listening; though their voices were guardedly low.

"Has any one seen my gloves?" she inquired with a somewhat majestic air, rising as she spoke from the instrument.

"I have not," replied Helen, who was nearest her. "But you are not going to put on your gloves yet, I hope, Mrs. Lockhart? Pray sing something else?"

"No thank you, my dear," was the reply. "I think you have all had enough of my music. But I really should be glad to know who has taken up my gloves? I certainly laid them down here." Her eye glanced towards Arthur Bertram, whose avoidance of her after the pains she had bestowed in attracting him at dinner, offended her not a little. He now drew near to assist in the search.

"You did not take Mrs. Lockhart's gloves by mistake for your own, Miss Lockhart?" he inquired, after vainly lifting some loose music, and peeping about in various directions. He turned as he spoke to Beatrice, who advanced in her turn to look for them.

"I assure you I did not," she replied.

"Thank you, Beatrice, dear," said her step-mother with a most winning smile. "I didn't suspect you, indeed. *My* gloves would never go on *your* hands. And here they are, I declare, on the floor all the time." Receiving them as she spoke from Helen, the lady tripped away from the pianoforte, leaving, as she flattered herself, a Parthian dart behind her.

Very soon after this, the Sempilltower carriage was announced, closely followed by Lady Bertram's; and in the course of a quarter of

an hour, the last vehicle had whirled from the door; Mr. Carmichael had departed on his solitary walk home to the manse, and the drawing-room at the Grange was left to the occupation of the inhabitants alone. The old lady sallied forth, as the outer-door closed after the latest guest, to put on an apron, and superintend in person the laying by of the remains of the feast. Miss Willie perambulated the room, putting out lights; her nieces addressed themselves to collecting the *disjecta membra* of MSS. music, &c., at the pianoforte; Miss Grace extended herself upon a sofa; Mrs. Henry Lockhart flung herself back in an arm-chair, after ordering the sleepy Anna Maria off to-bed; and Captain Lockhart, as usual, seated himself near the fire with a newspaper.

"Well," quoth Miss Grace, "I think our party went off beautifully. Dear me! how handsome Lady Bertram looked! And how elegant her dress was!"

"As to her dress," returned Mrs. Henry Lockhart, with a slight toss of the head, and downward glance at her own attire, "I saw nothing particular in *that*. But she is certainly a very handsome woman—a great deal of style! She puts me so much in mind of my Aunt

Clements, ma's sister. Nobody could mistake her for a Scutchwoman! But young Mr. Bertram is *my* beau! I've seen nothing like him. Grace, you never told me what a handsome young man he was."

"I am sure I did," replied Miss Grace, in high good humour; for her malleable heart had already forgiven, or rather forgotten, her sister-in-law's late offences. "It is a wonder if I did not; for Mr. Arthur Bertram (he is not *Mr.* Bertram—there is an elder brother) is a very interesting object in the eyes of some of this party. Beatrice, what do *you* say to Mrs. Henry calling Mr. Arthur Bertram *her* beau? There must be two words to that bargain, Mary Anne, my dear!"

Beatrice felt herself colour crimson, as her father for one instant, raising his eyes from his newspaper, fixed them upon her countenance; and after a brief scrutiny let them fall again. But she uttered not a syllable, nor indeed had she time; for Mrs. Henry Lockhart broke in with a laugh more full of bitterness than mirth.

"Upon my word, Grace, Miss Beatrice seems well supplied with beaux! One day it is Mr. Sumner—(and by the way, if he was such an admirer of your's, Beatrice, my dear, it

is odd enough that we have seen no more of him!)—Another day it is Mr. Bertram; *Mr. Arthur* I should say, begging his elder brother's pardon! Then I suppose we shall hear of old Captain Sempill next, or Mr. Carmichael, or both,—who knows? You are really well provided, Beatrice; I wish you joy!"

"I must say, Grace," interposed Captain Lockhart, laying down his newspaper, and standing erect with his back to the fire, "you *do* talk a confounded deal of nonsense; and I am very sorry to hear my daughter's name coupled in that way with any young puppy's who chooses to make advances to her. It is not at all the thing, Beatrice; I am much displeased at it."

"Dear papa!" timidly began his daughter. But a hysteric catching in her throat arrested the words, and gave time for Miss Willie to advance to the charge.

"You hear your father, Beatrice? I am not at all sorry you should have his opinion upon some subjects; or you either, Grace. What he would say if ——"

"What are ye a' sittin' claverin there for?" interrupted the old lady, at this critical juncture opening the door. "Did ye no' hear the bell ring for prayers?"

“ Well, well, we are giving ourselves a vast deal of trouble for nothing,” observed Mrs. Henry Lockhart, as the party proceeded towards the door. “ Take my word for it, Mr. Arthur Bertram is not quite so easily to be had for anybody’s beau, as some of us may have supposed. There are rather more than two words to *that* bargain, Grace.”

CHAPTER XVII.

"Mein Sohn! Mein Eteokles! Alles ist
Nicht schlimm am Alter. Die Erfahrung krönt's
Mit mancher Weisheit, die der Jugend mangelt.

• • • • •

Sieh! und nach diëser räsest du? Wie viel
Vortrefflicher ist Gleichheit! Gleichheit knüpft
Den Bundswerwandten mit den Bundswerwandten,
Den Freund zusammen mit den Freund, und Länder
Mit Ländern. Gleichheit ist das heilige Gesetz
Der Menschheit."

"EURIPIDES"—SCHILLER'S TRANSLATION.

IN about ten days after Mrs. Lockhart's dinner-party, Lady Bertram, having arranged her plans, and fixed her departure for the south with her son and daughter for the next day but one, set out to pay some farewell visits, accompanied by Emily. The Grange was last on the list, and they arrived there late in the afternoon. No one was at home when they did so, save the old lady and Miss Willie. The

other ladies of the family, they were told, had driven to St. Michael's, and Miss Beatrice was out walking. They were shown into the drawing-room, and remained there alone for some little time.

Whilst Emily was turning over, with a sarcastic smile, some of Mrs. Henry Lockhart's songs and music, which stood on the pianoforte, Lady Bertram went towards one of the windows, which looked right down upon the espalier walk, now stripped of all the leaves that were wont to embower it, and seated herself there, with her eyes directed to the garden. Here she had not sat two minutes, when to her indescribable surprise and annoyance she beheld two figures advancing up the walk, too deeply engaged in conversation to heed anything but each other; and recognised in one, Beatrice Lockhart, in the other her son Arthur, whom at that moment she had fancied to be shooting in the pheasant-preserves, quite at the other extremity of Kingsconnell Park! At this sight, which seemed to embody in an unexpectedly-alarming shape all Lady Bertram's undefined anxieties on the subject of Arthur's suspected attachment, though her heart throbbed high with proud and indignant feeling, not a

word escaped her lips; and Emily remained totally unconscious of what her mother had observed. Lady Bertram was habitually reserved with her children; one secret, perhaps, of her influence with Arthur; as it may be remarked that the power of reserve over an imaginative and susceptible character, is always very great. She was not one of those who either require confidence as an outlet for their own feelings, or encourage it from others. Whatever she did, was performed in silence and in calmness. On the present occasion she arose to meet Miss Willie, the only member of the household who at last made her appearance, with perfect ease and self-possession as usual; and entered as usual into conversation, whilst all the time she continued quietly to watch for the egress of her son from that part of the house, wherever it might be, into which he must evidently have entered; for on pretext of preferring it, she had retained her seat in the window.

Ten minutes passed;—a quarter of an hour;—no appearance of Arthur; five minutes more—to his mother's apprehension they might have been fifty; and yet he did not come out; and even Lady Bertram's high-bred

ease, as well as her supply of topics suited to one with whom she had not two ideas in common, began to fail her, when at last she beheld him, emerging from the side of the house, close by the drawing-room, and rapidly descending the garden. Immediately after, Lady Bertram arose to go.

"We must say good-bye, Miss Lockhart," she said, "the afternoon is darkening rapidly. How sweet the garden looks, even at this season," she added, turning towards the window. "This is the pleasantest side of the house, I should say, from the view it commands. Are there many more windows looking this way?"

"There is a room beyond this," replied Miss Willie, "farther along the terrace, which used to be my father's sitting-room, and which my nieces now have for their's; for their school-room, that is. They used to have their lessons there; and they practise their music, and so forth, in it."

"A sweet little room it is," said Emily. "Mademoiselle and I used often to pay our visits to Beatrice and Helen there, in old days; and go in by the window which opens on this terrace. I am sorry that I shall not see them

to-day, Miss Lockhart. Will you give them my kindest remembrances, if you please?"

This, Miss Willie readily undertook to do; and the visitors made their adieux, and departed.

The unconscious Beatrice, the while, was weeping bitterly in the school-room, under the influence of that sudden collapse of the heart, which followed after her last glimpse of Arthur. Their meeting that day had not been premeditated; though it could not be denied that the steps of Beatrice, when left, as on the present occasion, to the luxury of a solitary walk, never voluntarily turned in any other direction than towards the paths by the river-side. There she had been overtaken by Arthur, and there had they, for the last three hours, been rambling or sitting on their wonted seat. The hours had fled like minutes, in a sweet trance of happiness, though shaded on either side by the knowledge that this, for a long time to come, must be their last intercourse. Sir Thomas Bertram's family did not mean to spend the ensuing Christmas at Kingsconnell; so Arthur informed Beatrice. They were under a promise to pass it at Milldenhanger, the seat of their intimate friends Lord and Lady Mountjoye,

recently returned from a residence of some years on the Continent. And long ere summer came he himself would be chained to the official duties to which he looked forward as his destined opening in the career of active life ; and thenceforward his periods of liberty would be few and far between. He talked of this in a tone of sadness which was more than echoed by the heart of his companion. It seemed as if both were now quitting, and for ever, the fairy-land of girl-and-boyhood, with all its lovely dreams. And when in a low and trembling voice Beatrice alluded to the possibility of her father's removing her and Helen from the house of their grandmother,—the surprise, the pain, and ill-concealed agitation with which Arthur heard her, almost startled her from all self-control, and it was only with difficulty that she escaped bursting into tears.

Her companion, on his side, seemed as if he remained silent by dint of a similar effort. Nor did many more words pass between them. In silence they pursued their way to the gate at the foot of the garden ; but Arthur did not pause, nor appear inclined to say farewell ; and it was a word which Beatrice could not bring herself to utter. He accompanied her, as we

have seen, into the school-room; and there awhile they lingered, as loth to come to the last parting; but fearful at length of some inauspicious interruption, Arthur felt that the time had arrived, and arose to go. The words he said were few; it was the look which accompanied them,—the long, fervent, slowly-relinquished grasp of the hand, which lent them significance; and remained to haunt the memory of Beatrice, as such things do haunt the memory of woman, through many a long after-day.

Arthur proceeded homeward through the woods, his mind full of conflicting thoughts. The uncalculating impulse of boyhood, under whose influence he had for years loved Beatrice Lockhart, had been dispelled at once, and his eyes opened to the state of his own feelings, by her departure from Kingsconnell after her visit there. He had always, without clearly knowing why, shrunk from coming in contact with her grandmother and aunts, and had felt pleased, on occasion of Captain Lockhart's first return to the Grange, to discover his superiority to them. But now he became conscious of a nervous anxiety to see the step-mother whom the father had given his daugh-

ters ; which, after he had seen her, gave place to a sensation of revulsion in his own mind, from her as well as from the elder ladies of the family, which at once told him what the feelings of his mother and sister must be, and rendered the irritation of hearing them expressed the greater. A conflict the most violent was aroused in his mind between passionate attachment on the one hand, and pride and fastidiousness of nature on the other ; aided in its working by the sarcastic remarks of Lady Bertram and Emily on their return from the Grange, more than once repeated in his hearing since then, and never failing to tell as they were meant to do. In short, Arthur had spent the intervening time between that and the day when he again met Beatrice, in a state of mental trouble, perplexity, and suffering, indescribable. On that day he had gone out to shoot in the park, and directed his steps towards the old familiar haunt by the river-side, hoping that some accidental circumstance might favour his eager longing for another sight of her alone ; and as we have seen, the strange internal sympathy which so often attracts those who love to unpremeditated meetings, had been at work in their instance. To catch a glimpse

of her, to abandon his sport, and fly to join her, were with Arthur the work of a minute ; and as he did so, he forgot, like her, all care and pain, and returned for a brief space to the dreams of happier hours. Recollection was again awakened by the train of conversation into which they fell near the close of their interview ; but this time it was under the spell of her presence ; and as he caught the faltering of her sweet youthful voice, and the sudden rush of tears into her limpid eyes, when she alluded to the possibility of leaving the Grange, it required a strong exertion of self-control, a keen recollection of his mother's sarcastic tone and look, to prevent him at that moment seizing her hand, and pouring forth his feelings to her on the spot. Again, at the moment of their parting, the impulse, to make some demonstration of what he felt, was nearly uncontrollable. He *did* control it ; but as he left the house, he felt nearly choked with contending emotions, and longed, though he resisted the longing, to rush back into her presence, and tell her all,—all his love, all his trouble,—throw himself upon her candid and generous heart, and ask her to be true to him, however long it might be ere their hopes could be

realized. But the impulse was not followed out, and it passed away.

As Arthur entered the iron gates of the parterre in front of Kingsconnell House, the carriage had just deposited his mother and sister there; and he was forced to collect his thoughts, and remain to talk with them.

"Why, Arthur, where is your gun?" asked Emily. "I thought you took out Purves, and went to shoot?"

"I did," replied Arthur, "but I gave him my gun to bring home."

"Are you quite well, dearest Arthur?" inquired his sister, passing her arm through his, and looking up in his face. "Mamma, doesn't he look so pale? Is anything the matter with you, Arthur?"

"Nothing, love," he replied, bending down to kiss her forehead,— "nothing of consequence. I am tired to-night, a little, that is all."

"Are you too much tired to give me your arm for a little walk on the terrace, Arthur?" asked Lady Bertram. "It is such a sweet calm evening, I should quite regret going into the house."

"I shall be very happy, dear mother," said he. "Emily, are you disposed to join us?"

"I should recommend Emily not to do so," interposed Lady Bertram. "She has a little cold, and must take care of herself, in preparation for our journey on Wednesday."

Emily laughingly promised obedience to the order, and went into the house; whilst the mother and son slowly sauntered along the terrace, still beautified by some lingering flowers; and under which the Pleasance, not yet leafless, lay calm and still beneath the soft grey evening sky. They proceeded almost in silence, until they drew near the glass-door of William's sitting-room, at which Arthur involuntarily made a moment's pause, then recollected himself with a sigh.

"Dear William!" exclaimed Lady Bertram, "when shall we see him there again? Arthur," she proceeded after a short silence, "I asked you to walk with me just now, because I am most anxious for a little uninterrupted conversation with you, on a subject which gives me much pain and uneasiness. Your sister was surprised to see you return home without your gun, but I was already aware that you would do so. You did not know that she and I were at the Grange this afternoon, or that I happened to be sitting in

the drawing-room window there, looking into the garden, when you entered, and when you left it !”

Lady Bertram was leaning on her son’s left arm, as she spoke these words ; and although he made her no audible reply, she felt the start, as if from an unexpected stroke, with which he heard them, and the throbbing of his heart which followed. But without appearing to observe his emotion, she went on.

“ My dear Arthur, I must ask you one question, and I trust to your honour to answer it truly. I may do so, may I not ?”

“ Mother, I should hope so !” said Arthur, in a voice of suppressed agitation, and drawing himself proudly up.

“ Tell me then, I entreat you, my dear boy,—I am not too late in my remonstrance ? You have not irretrievably committed yourself ? You are not engaged to Miss Lockhart, Arthur ?”

“ I am not, upon my honour !” he replied in the same half-stifled tone.

“ You have not spoken as if—— ? Nothing has passed—— ? Tell me the whole truth, Arthur !”

“ I am not in the habit of disguising the

truth, mother," returned her son. "Nothing has passed between Miss Lockhart and me that could admit of the interpretation you suspect. That I admire,—respect,—*love* her,—I do not pretend to deny."

"But you have never told her so?"

"Never. Never in words, at least."

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed Lady Bertram, as if breathing more freely. "And yet," she pursued in a low voice, and as it were in soliloquy, "she could be guilty of the impropriety of admitting such clandestine visits, unsanctioned even by the fact of a clandestine engagement! Can it be possible a young lady could so far forget what is due to herself?"

"Mother!" passionately interrupted Arthur, "forgive me! but I will not and cannot hear you say so. The fault, if any there be, is mine alone. A creature more perfectly innocent of a thought or feeling bordering upon impropriety,—more entirely pure and single-hearted,—never breathed than Beatrice Lockhart. If I have exposed her to such unkind judgments,—I——"

"Not unkind, Arthur. There can be no leaven of unkindness in my feelings towards a young lady so frequently the companion of your

sister, and whom I admit to be a most amiable and attractive girl. For her own sake, you must permit me to regret that she should have been so deficient in prudence as to allow you to do what must lay her open to misconstruction from the most lenient; but as a mother, I can feel for the errors of one who is worse than motherless."

"My dear mother, allow me to say——"

"I feel all that you would say, Arthur," interposed Lady Bertram. "I blame you much more than I do Miss Lockhart, and deeply regret that you should have been the means of leading her into imprudence. Would that I had known of it sooner, for all our sakes! for I cannot suppose the present to have been a solitary instance of the kind. But blameable as you must feel yourself to be, you cannot close your eyes to the fact that this very facility on the young lady's part speaks volumes as to the defective training under which she has grown up; and affords an ample commentary on the singular deficiencies of the family circle in which she has the misfortune to live."

"Of them," exclaimed Arthur, "I can say nothing. But, my dear mother, permit me to assure you that you are unjust,—that you

are wronging Miss Lockhart and me also. I——”

“I am glad to hear you say so, Arthur,” again interrupted his mother. “But I, who have lived longer in the world than you have done, must nevertheless point out to you that such liberties permitted by a young lady to a young man, could meet with no more favourable construction from any-one; and would not, in all probability, be viewed by others with the extenuating circumstances that I perceive in the case. I wish to make you sensible of the cruel injustice you do Miss Lockhart by such conduct,—of the lasting disadvantages your persistence in it would entail upon her. You never can be more to each other than you now are, and you do not reflect upon the consequences to her of having her name coupled with your’s in this way.”

“Mother!” exclaimed Arthur with vehemence, “do not speak to me thus! I love Beatrice Lockhart! I have loved her since my boyhood. I can never cease to love her.”

“You had better say so to your father, my dear Arthur,” replied his mother in her calmest tone, “and hear what his answer will be! For my part, I only ask you to contemplate for a

moment all that the gratification of the boyish inclination, which you mistake for love, would involve. Nay, hear me out, Arthur! I have a right that my son should hear me on such a topic. I beg you to picture to yourself the consequences of entering the world,—entering society, not as a free and independent being, whose natural place is amongst the foremost in the land, but fettered by an obscure engagement, of which, believe me, you would not be slow to repent, when repentance was too late. I ask you to imagine yourself ‘cursed with a granted prayer!’—to suppose the most improbable thing in the world—that your father should ever be induced to agree to your forming such a connexion. Fancy yourself married to Miss Lockhart, while still a young man,—dragged down to the obscure mediocrity inevitable on such an event; for trust me, who have had more experience than you can boast, a man’s position in society depends infinitely more upon the connexions of his wife than upon his own. Imagine yourself no longer the idol of the best circles,—as, my Arthur, no one ever was more amply fitted to be,—but the husband of a wife, however amiable, who could give you no consequence, who would be an obstacle

to your career in life, and for whose relations you would be compelled to blush whenever you came in contact with them. Imagine yourself addressed as their 'dear nephew' by her aunts ! Imagine her stepmother having a right to talk of you as her son !"

Arthur made no reply, but again his mother distinctly felt the hurrying pulsations of his heart. She felt that the shaft had struck where it was aimed.

"It is very painful to me, my dear boy," she resumed in a gentler tone, "to talk to you thus. I feel for all the suffering I am inflicting on you, nor do I expect you, just at present, to enter into my views. But I leave what I have suggested to make its own way with you, at a calmer moment. I am inexpressibly relieved and thankful to find that my first most anxious fears have deceived me, and that this unfortunate affair has gone to no lengths which would render it impossible for you, in honour, to withdraw. You are leaving this neighbourhood,—you are about to enter into active life ; and whatever you may now think, believe me, the period will arrive when you will consider the consequent cessation of this intercourse as much a matter of thankful-

ness as I do. Now we shall not allude to the subject again. I have not of course mentioned it to your sister. It is time to go in-doors. Really almost dark." And imprinting a tender kiss on the deathly-pale and cold cheek of her son, Lady Bertram glided from his arm, and disappeared at one of the side-doors which opened on the terrace.

Arthur, thus left alone, moved a few paces forward, and flung himself upon one of the stone seats, near which he had been standing, his face buried in his outstretched arms,—his brain a whirl of bitter, torturing thoughts. His mother had chosen her ground with consummate knowledge of his character, which violent opposition would only have roused to indignant self-defence; whereas the calm, dispassionate tone she had adopted; the cool scorn with which she dismissed as out of the question every hope most dear to him; the quiet, reasoning worldliness with which she arrayed the subject before him, stripped of all its golden hues of romance and poetry, fell upon his heart like mildew, and seemed at once to wither up energy and hope. But most of all agonizing to his generous nature, was the cruel manner in which Lady Bertram had

talked of Beatrice; doubly agonising, because, whilst he felt the utter injustice of the imputation cast on a creature, whose only error was excess of simplicity and ignorance of the world, and an unbounded degree of good faith, amounting to credulity, he was yet compelled to acknowledge the impossibility of bringing this view of her character home to the comprehension of a mind like that of his mother; and in bitterness of heart to own that in an abstract and worldly point of view, all that the latter had said was incontrovertibly true, and that he *had* exposed her whom he loved to be lightly thought of, and blamed by persons skilled in the world and its ways, like Lady Bertram. It was agony,—a very chaos of bewilderment and pain. The feelings of Arthur were acute and impetuous in proportion to his susceptibility of impressions; and this, with the exception of the grief and anxiety which his brother's illness had given him, was the first severe trial of his life. As such, it was felt as only youth does feel trial. It cost him a violent effort,—a struggle which nothing but his pride could have achieved, to master himself at last, so far as to rise and enter the house; and afterwards to join his mother and sister at dinner, his

temples throbbing with acute pain, and his countenance so ghastly pale, as more and more to confirm Emily's persuasion that he must be suffering from illness, and even to render his mother anxious on his account, although she abstained from taking notice of his altered looks.

Lady Bertram's anxiety respecting her son was still further increased, when she observed him, for the first time that she had ever done so, drink glass after glass of wine during dinner, almost without eating anything; and then pass from silence and abstraction to extravagantly high spirits. But she reflected that he must be suffering severely, and although she did not for a moment regret having inflicted that suffering, she knew that forbearance with its outward manifestations was necessary. Nor did she even venture any remonstrance, when on the evening of the following day, she saw him repeat the same perilous remedy against thought. Arthur had passed a sleepless night, succeeded by a restless, miserable day; he had ordered out his horse, and galloped recklessly over the country; then, returning late in the afternoon had left it at the stables, and repaired once more, on foot, to the banks of the Connell Water.

Then, after long wandering through those familiar paths, without any such encounter as his fancy had represented as possible, he had flung himself, in the despairing impulse of ungoverned feelings, upon the damp ground below the lime tree, near the seat so often mentioned; and there remained, calling up in mournful review every particular of his acquaintance with Beatrice Lockhart,—living over again the hours they had spent together,—dwelling on her loveliness, her innocence,—the charms of her intellect,—and then torturing himself anew by going over his last night's conversation with his mother, every word of which seemed burnt in upon his brain. So long did this painful reverie continue, that when he at length shook it off, and arose from his chilly couch, the evening was so dark that he could with difficulty distinguish the path home. The effects of this imprudence, combined with the unwonted excess of the evening, the want of sleep, and the excitement of his nervous system, speedily made themselves felt; and when the morning came, and he was compelled to rise early from his restless bed, for the purpose of commencing the journey with his mother and sister, every pulse in his frame was throbbing with fever, and

every nerve racked with pain. He exerted himself, however, to disguise this; almost welcoming the bodily suffering and the confusion of ideas, resulting from illness, as a relief from the torture of his own thoughts. But as the day wore on, and these sensations increased, it was impossible for him any longer to conceal how very ill he felt; the very motion of the carriage became insupportable; and Emily, in an agony of alarm, as she sustained his burning head upon her shoulder, and Lady Bertram, now seriously uneasy, thought the last stage to Edinburgh, where they intended to pass the night, utterly interminable, and had never been more thankful than when at last they reached their hotel.

Here the medical man, who was instantly summoned, pronounced Arthur to be labouring under a somewhat serious attack of fever; which did in fact confine him to bed for several days, and the severe measures necessary to remove which so reduced his strength as to detain the party upwards of a fortnight, ere it was possible for them to re-commence their journey. Such were the tidings promulgated at the Grange by Dr. Chisholm, who being invested by Sir Thomas Bertram with the medical

charge of such of his household as were left at Kingsconnell, was very frequently there, and received much information respecting the movements of the family from the housekeeper. The doctor farther added, that Arthur, as soon as he recovered, had been forced to leave his mother and sister, and proceed direct to London to meet his father, the period of his illness having consumed the time previously allotted to a tour of visits.

The vague intelligence to be gleaned from the chance revelations of Dr. Chisholm, in which she dared not testify the interest she felt, was all that Beatrice learned of Arthur from the time of his departure. Emily and she had never been regular correspondents, as Lady Bertram had discouraged the inclination in her daughter, but still she had in former days received occasional letters from her friend. Latterly they had been less frequent; and at present were altogether discontinued. Mr. Carmichael, had he chosen, could have told her more than any one else; but the subject was one on which he could not bring himself to speak, and did not feel called upon to do so. The letters which he received from William Bertram at this period dwelt much upon his

brother, who, after concluding the arrangements in London for which his father required his presence, had gone down to the Isle of Wight to join him; and he mentioned Arthur as looking extremely ill, and being in very low spirits, and wrote with affectionate anxiety respecting his future career, though without divulging what he had told him in confidence.

Nor was William's anxiety groundless; he knew at once the strength of Arthur's feelings, and the infirmity of his will. He felt that the passion whose threatened disappointment had laid him on a bed of sickness, might be sapped and undermined by a slower process; and at the same time he so well understood his character as to be assured that the ultimate annihilation of a sentiment which had so entwined itself with all the best and finest impulses of his being, as to be one of its most powerful safeguards against evil, would be to him like casting a vessel adrift on the ocean, without helm or pilot. Deeply impressed with those convictions, the efforts of William, during his present intercourse with his brother, were all directed to fortifying his resolutions,—and to encouraging him to patience and constancy. Strenuously inculcating the duty of filial obe-

dience, he represented to Arthur the efficacy of time in softening, changing, obliterating impressions once deemed indelible, and admonished him, whatever might betide, to be true to himself, and to the object of a well-placed attachment, as the surest means of making all right in the end. And Arthur, who was ever led on and upwards when under the influence of his brother, left him, when at last compelled to do so, a better and a happier man, for the time, than he had come to him.

CHAPTER XVI.

“ For ever would the fond enthusiast rove,
With Julia's spirit, thro' the shadowy grove;
Gaze with delight on every scene she plann'd,
Kiss every floweret planted by her hand.
Ah! still he traced her steps along the glade,
When hazy hues and glimmering lights betrayed
Half viewless forms; still listened as the breeze
Heaved its deep sobs among the aged trees:
And at each pause her melting accents caught,
In sweet delirium of romantic thought.”

PLEASURES OF MEMORY.

THE early part of the winter passed slowly on, without bringing any marked variety to the household at the Grange. Captain and Mrs. Lockhart were still its inmates, and it was understood that they were not to quit it until after Christmas; though what their future plans might be, and whether or not Beatrice and Helen were to be included in their arrangements, or left, as at present, with their grandmother, was a point on which neither had

as yet vouchsafed the smallest information to any one. The old lady, whose shrewd, managing mind dwelt much upon the subject, had dropped many hints, intended to elicit an explanation; but none as yet had come; and she and Miss Willie were alike troubled in spirit, but inclined to suspect that the difficulty lay with Mrs. Henry Lockhart, who was probably disinclined for the society of her step-daughters. To this idea poor Miss Grace also clung, as not enduring to anticipate a separation from her nieces; and the latter privately shared her feelings, although the subject was never openly alluded to between them. Miss Winter, meanwhile, had taken her departure at the term of Martinmas; and as her destination was London, Mrs. Henry Lockhart had through her instrumentality been enabled to get handsomely rid of her daughter. Protesting that she did not understand children, and could not manage Anna Mariar, she adopted a resolution of restoring her to the care of her mamma and Agatha, with whom, as she averred, the little girl was always much happier than with herself. Miss Winter therefore received charge of her as far as London, whence she was to be forwarded by coach

to Brighton, the residence of her grandmother, Mrs. Stokes.

The departure of the spoilt, pert, *ennuyée* child could not but be hailed as a relief by all concerned ; especially by Beatrice and Helen, whose anticipations of what was to be done with her after Miss Winter left, had been of the most gloomy description. Yet they could not but feel pity for a creature so little loved by the heart in which nature had given her the highest stake ; and it appeared to them too, that since her mother had so coolly decided on parting with her, their father's brow had daily worn a sadder, gloomier aspect. Not that he particularly loved the little girl, who was, in fact, as little capable of attracting affection as any spoilt child usually is ; but she was a creature to whom he was accustomed,—a plaything ; something young and lively, of whom he did not see enough to be sensible how extremely troublesome she was ; and he missed her, and felt the blank her absence caused in the house, where the youthful spirit of his daughters had been too effectually checked, and where his own reserve and silence sank too chillingly upon them, to admit of those sallies of mirth and gaiety, which are

the natural and delightful vent for the exuberant life of the young. Day by day, as the dark and gloomy sky of November brooded more heavily over the earth, did Captain Lockhart's congenial gloom increase. His days were frittered, wasted away, as a country-life affords any man unbounded scope for doing, who is not possessed of a high degree of intellectual energy. The morning was consumed, sometimes in writing a letter, or lounging over a newspaper; in a dawdling conversation with Lowry M'Fyke, over his farm or garden work, and in sauntering out for an hour or two with his gun, or walking or riding into St. Michael's, or to Gatesford, for some trifling object, or for none, as the case might be; more rarely in paying a visit at Sempilltower, or some other house in the neighbourhood; for Captain Lockhart's life had estranged him much from the scenes and associates of his boyhood; and his temper, from being joyous and sociable, had of late years become completely altered in both respects. Be the occupation of the day what it might, it was at this season necessarily over soon after four o'clock; and then came the five o'clock dinner, and the long, lounging, thoroughly idle evening, whose tediousness was

too frequently eked out by a slumber over the book or newspaper, taken up to beguile it. In one respect, the evenings at the Grange were less intolerable than of old. The close and fusty parlour, though its use as a breakfast and dining-room had been restored, was no longer the sole receptacle of the whole household. Mrs. Lockhart had never been able so far to feel at her ease with her English daughter-in-law as to revert to this habit. Somehow, the new Mrs. Henry Lockhart had never suffered herself to amalgamate with her husband's family, as her infinitely more ladylike predecessor had done when their inmate; whence it came that amongst other unwonted refinements, this particular one continued to hold its place. But this did not much signify. The atmosphere which rendered the evenings what they were, came less from without than from within.

Mrs. Henry Lockhart, all this time, felt, and did not scruple to avow the feeling, nearly dead of *ennui*. Often and loudly did she express her astonishment how any human beings could contrive to vegetate in this manner from-year to year; and declare, in no measured terms, that, this her first experience of a similar state of existence, should be her last. The employ-

ments of *her* day consisted in the execution of various elaborate devices in worsted work, in trying on and having her dresses altered by her maid; in writing occasional letters to her mamma,—in playing and singing; and sometimes under a desperate attack of weariness, taking refuge from herself in one of Miss Grace's dirty novels. Her evening engagements, although they still occasionally occurred, were now less numerous than at first; but her jealous dislike of both her step-daughters,—of Beatrice in particular, seemed in no degree diminished, by being less frequently called forth; and the two girls found no difficulty in recurring to their former habits of passing their mornings alone in the school-room, engaged in prosecuting their various studies; and even without rudeness, contrived very frequently to enjoy their afternoon walks undisturbed by any other companion. But still more frequently it occurred that Helen was invited by her step-mother to accompany her and her usual attendant, Miss Grace, upon some walk to the village or elsewhere at hand, or on some more distant excursion, on occasion of the old lady's condescending to lend them the carriage. These invitations, from which Beatrice was markedly

excluded, the latter would not allow her sister to decline, rightly arguing that it would be unbecoming in either of them to draw back from any demonstration of friendly feeling on the part of their father's wife; and the consequence was, that she herself was more frequently left alone than in her present state of feeling was good for her. Not more frequently than she liked; for her's was one of those reflective natures, those "hermit-spirits," to which, even in early youth, silent self-communing is a matter of necessity, and in whose depths a profound under-current is constantly flowing, which bears little or no relation to what lies above the surface. But independently of this, there were other and stronger feelings which, at the present time, rendered solitude at once captivating and perilous for her. To be alone, and to abandon herself to a dream of Arthur Bertram, were one and the same thing; and each time this indulgence was repeated, the feeling which possessed her whole being gained in strength and intensity. Absence, to strong affection, is as oxygen to flame. The life of Beatrice was gradually becoming absorbed in this one pervading sentiment. The image of Arthur intervened between her and all

things earthly,—all things heavenly. At times a startling sense of her over-idolatrous absorption would come across her. She would blush and weep to find to feel how little any other subject interested her, even those which most nearly touched her. And when attending, as she and Helen now almost every Sunday contrived to do, the services of her own Church,—joining with the lips in that inspired ritual, or listening to the words of calm and holy exhortation from their venerable pastor, an agonizing consciousness of her own deadness of heart would overwhelm her; and the angel-face of her departed mother would appear to her mental vision, gazing upon her child with a well-remembered look of anxious, watchful love. It might not be all fancy; for if the strength of maternal love avail aught in the mysterious world of separate spirits, few more urgent calls upon it can be conceived than the situation of this unwarned, unguarded, richly-gifted being, thus perilling her all,—risking all the happiness of her life, and the well-being of her immortal soul, on the cast of so frail a die. Well might the mother's spirit mourn to see her child's young heart flung back upon its own delusive dreams by the uncongeniality of a

home without home-affections or home-duties, as was the case with that inhabited by Beatrice.

Day after day, indeed, augmented the painful sense of discrepancy among the inmates of that joyless home. There was nothing on which to fall back for repose,—nothing,—save the love and tenderness of the young and innocent Helen, equally with Beatrice herself a sufferer from its trials. And of these, sad to say! the presence of their father was now becoming one of the sorest. For there is less of pain in dwelling with a known enemy than with a chilled and alienated friend. And how much worse must be the pain when that friend is a parent! This, too, was no case for explanations; none for reproach, regret, or reconciliation. There were no complaints of misconduct in them. There was nothing tangible at all; only the bodily presence of him who had once been so fond, so proud a father, dwelling amongst them, as it seemed, without the soul; wrapt in an impenetrable mantle of gloomy silence and reserve, alike defying approach, confidence, and scrutiny. Day after day, saddened, depressed, and uneasy, did Beatrice issue forth alone from this

mockery of a home, not to seek relief in active exertion for others, in wholesome counsel, or in elevating companionship, but to wander alone, and yet not alone, in the woods of Kingsconnell, finding a dreary unison with her own feelings in the aspect of nature,—in the leafless trees above, the sear leaves beneath,—the solemn hush amongst the wintry woods, and the pale, grey, silent sky bending over all. Day after day did she retrace those familiar paths, where every step brought forth the living presence of Arthur; recalling his footstep, his voice, the grasp of his hand, the impassioned language of his eye; living over again every hour which they had spent together, almost every word which she had ever heard him speak.

And from these absorbing visions, she was wont to return as darkness began to fall, yet generally to find herself at home before the rest of the party; when, having completed her simple toilette for dinner, she would seat herself at her mother's old piano-forte in the schoolroom, there, in the grey wintry twilight, to give utterance to her heart's dreams in passionate strains of song and music; or hanging over the hearth, would read by the fire-light yet more impassioned strains of poetry,

indelibly associated in her mind with the too-well remembered voice of Arthur. From dreams like these, how difficult, how bitter, the return to actual life, in the form under which it surrounded her! How hard for those whose early experiences have been of love, and care, and "the sweet bounties of constraint," involved in the domestic duties which existed not for her, to understand the temptations to vain and visionary self-indulgence, which beset her daily path!

And all these temptations were assisted in their assaults by the well-meant, but most injudicious aid lent them by poor Miss Grace. Now that the latter no longer ventured to throw out hints and surmises in public respecting Arthur Bertram's attachment to her niece, she solaced herself for the privation by redoubling them in private, whenever she was alone with the two girls; and found no dearer consolation, on any of the dark rainy afternoons which so frequently occur at that season, than in repairing, in the dusk, to sit over the schoolroom fire, there to indulge in discussions more interesting even than her usual novel reading, but infinitely less inoffensive. Beatrice might feel amused or hurt by them at the

time, but they had their effect nevertheless. The incessant repetition of all the feelings, ideas, and motives, imputed to Arthur, preposterous as she felt many of the conjectures to be, tended to fix the subject in her, and foster her habit of profitless dreaming. His name, his image, were perpetually before her, in one shape or another; and the period when they might meet again, was the goal of her every thought, the theme of her incessant meditation and conjecture.

CHAPTER XVII.

" I set my back unto an aik,
I thocht it was a trusty tree,
But first it bowed, and syne it brake,
Sae my fause love's forsaken me."

SCOTTISH SONG.

" WELL, I declare, mem, this is very kind and friendly. I'm glad to see you, Mrs. Henry." Such was the salutation of Miss Babie Chisholm, as the younger Mrs. Lockhart was ushered alone into her comfortable parlour, on a bitter cold morning, the third of the new year.

" Thank you," was the reply ; " it is shockingly cold. Miss Willie came down with me, and she is gone to see Miss Mark, so I shall wait here till she comes back."

" Most happy to have you here, mem. And what's the news with you this morning? Anything astir your way?"

" *Our* way?" retorted the lady, with a little

sharp laugh. "That would be something wonderful. There's never anything going on with us."

"Not much, ma'am, I dare-say, this cold weather. But have ye any news of the worthy family at Sempilltower, how they're bearing their distress?"

Miss Babie put the question in a tone of real interest; for all who knew them, felt deeply for the Sempill family, in the sorrow which had come upon them a fortnight previously; tidings, namely, of the death of their youngest son, the father of Walter and Philip. The account of his increased illness at Torquay, where he was passing the winter, had caused Captain Sempill, the only member of the household equal to the exertion, to set off thither some time before the event, and there he still remained with his sister-in-law. Mrs. Henry Lockhart, however, could give no report on the subject. What were the Sempills to her? "She believed they were all tolerably well. She had not seen any of them."

"It's a dismal Christmas, this to them!" sighed Miss Babie.

"Christmas!" ejaculated her visitor. "You Scutch people don't know the meaning of the

word. I say one had better sleep all winter like a dormouse, than pass it as you do."

"Rather different from your gay doings in the South, ma'am, I dare say," replied Miss Babie; "but it has been particular dull this year, which is unlucky for you, being a stranger. What with the absence of Sir Thomas's charming family, and the affliction at Sempilltower, the country-side has been under a cloud."

"A cloud indeed!" exclaimed Mrs. Lockhart. "Ellis came to me this morning, to ask what I should put on; she wanted to know if I chose to have my scarlet merino pelisse, with chinchilla trimmings, or my ermine muff and tippet; and I said, 'Why, Ellis, where is the use of dressing? would you have me dress to go down walking to the Clakkan? Who is there to dress for there?' 'Very true, ma'am,' she said, 'but one must dress for one's own sake.' 'Why really, Ellis,' said I, 'the thing I shall be most inclined to do for my own sake if I stay much longer here, will be to hang myself. I can't stand it. I really can't.' However, at last she persuaded me to put on this shawl and boa."

"And very handsome they are," responded Miss Babie, who, be it observed, like all vulgar-

mindful people, felt too much over-crowded by Mrs. Lockhart's pretensions to resent her ill-breeding. "I see no dress to compare to your's, Mrs. Henry."

"They're old things," was the careless reply; "good enough for the Grange. I shall give them to Ellis when I return to Brighton."

"And are we to lose you soon, ma'am? Are you speaking of going to Brighton already?"

"Already!" exclaimed her guest, who was apparently not in the best possible humour, and could not resist venting her spleen, even upon her obsequious hostess; "I don't know what you call *already*, Miss Chisholm. I seem to have been here a century. I wish it depended on me when to return to Brighton. I promise you it shouldn't be long. But I think Harry is bewitched to that nasty old place." And she stretched forth her pretty feet in their nicely-fitting fur boots, upon a stool before the fire, and leant back in the comfortable arm-chair assigned her, pushing away the ringlets which hung over her face, from beneath the shade of her dark blue velvet bonnet, with an air of indescribably cross, despairing resignation.

"A most lovely bonnet that is, Mrs. Henry," said Miss Babie. "Quite the high fashion. Miss Bertram had one very like it last winter, only none of those beautiful flowers that you have. You've certainly great taste. It looks so well with your fine hair."

"As to my fine hair," responded her visitor, "it will be all over with my hair if I stay long in Scutland. This damp cold air takes all the curl out of it, and I declare I think the very colour is changed since I came here. Ellis quite mourns over it."

"Oh, Mrs. Henry, what a notion!" laughed Miss Babie, in her most conciliatory tone. "There's very few heads of hair like your's, or your sweet little Miss' either."

"Anna Mariar's hair will never be equal to mine," replied Mrs. Lockhart. "Mamma says my hair, at her age, was like what a friend of her's, who had a fine taste in poetry, called 'woven sunbeams.'"

"No doubt, no doubt," quoth Miss Babie. "Fine hair is a great beauty. Miss Helen's hair is much admired, ma'am—your daughter's. For my part, I think, I prefer the colour of Miss Lockhart's. I don't know. They're both pretty girls."

"Helen is tolerable," returned Mrs. Lockhart; "but really," and again she laughed a sharp short laugh, "as to Beatrice being pretty, Miss Chisholm, why 'tis a thing that nobody out of Scutland would ever dream of saying or thinking. Quite absurd to see the people who pass for beauties in Scutland. There was my cousin Phillis ——." Whereupon ensued a narrative with which our readers are already well acquainted, but to which Miss Babie lent a serious ear, and at the conclusion produced her currant wine, short bread and bun.

"And are the young ladies, your daughters, ma'am, come back from St. Michael's?" she inquired, as the refecton was being partaken.

"My *daughters*?" returned the lady, rather quickly; "anything so ridiculous, as dear mamma says in her last letter, as to fancy great girls who almost look like my elder sisters, being called my daughters! However, what else can one expect in marrying a man nearly as old as one's papa——?"

Miss Babie, perceiving that her visitor was somewhat irate, although she herself could not quite swallow the assertion respecting elder sisters, or perceive how it was possible under any circumstances, that Captain Lockhart

should have been his lady's papa, hastened to interpose an amiable assurance that nobody in their senses could fail to see that the Miss Lockharts could only be step-daughters of so youthful a mamma; and Mrs. Lockhart, somewhat mollified, proceeded to answer her questions. The girls had returned the previous day from St. Michael's, where they had spent the week, from Christmas to New Year's Day, with Miss Alexander. Dull enough Mrs. Lockhart had no doubt it must have been, with that frumpy old lady. Everybody was dull and "stupid" alike.

"It has been a most uncommon season this, mem, in that respect," said Miss Babie. "But dear me, since Sir Thomas's family took possession of Kingsconnell, the Christmas there has always been a very gay affair, I assure you. And in a quieter way there was always something pleasant, and sociable, and friendly, at Sempilltower at this time. Saving and excepting the year poor Mrs. Reginald died, and that's an old story now, the family never missed entertaining all their neighbours in the Daft Days."

"*Deft* days? What may they be, ma'am?"

enquired the visitor, with something of a civil sneer.

"*Daft*, Mrs. Henry, *daft* days. It's an old Scotch phrase for the week between Christmas and New Year's Day. A merry time, as the word signifies, it used to be at Sempilltower. And as to Kingsconnell, I declare, as I was just saying to the doctor this day, now we've got used to a family living at Kingsconnell, it's not to be told how we miss them. The pleasure it used to be to look at these three fine young men! for really Mr. Hugh's quite man-like now. And poor dear Mr. Bertram—I think I see him here at this moment, riding up to our gate, as he used many a time to do, and stopping to speak with that sweet smile of his: and such a graceful creature as he was on horseback. And as to Mr. Arthur, you've seen him, mem? He's just a perfect beauty."

"Yes, he's really very well, I must say, and not at all like a Scutchman. He'll soon be the heir, I suppose, Miss Chisholm? I fancy Mr. Bertram is dying."

"Oh goodness forbid, Mrs. Henry, I hope not!" exclaimed worthy Miss Babie, greatly shocked. "I can tell you there would be

many a wet cheek for him. But indeed, ma'am, you're mistaken if you suppose I know anything more on the subject than yourself, for the Doctor understands his business too well to talk about his patients. It would never do for a medical man so much in their confidence as he is. He keeps all to himself. Only I really hope and trust Mr. Bertram is to get round yet. He would be greatly missed, I assure you, both by rich and poor. You've no notion what a generous, open-handed creature he is, and so kind to everybody that needs kindness. Mr. Arthur is young and thoughtless, but he has a noble, liberal heart with his money too. How is Miss Lockhart taking his absence this winter, ma'am?—Miss Beattress, I mean?" And Miss Babie confidentially hitched her chair closer to that of her guest, and looked in her face with a meaning smile.

"Taking his absence? Why how *should* she take it? What has she to do with him?" sharply replied Mrs. Lockhart.

"Oh! indeed, ma'am, you must surely know better than that? Mr. Arthur and Miss Beattress have been very sweet upon each other this many a long day. Did you ever see them together, Mrs. Henry?"

"Yes, to be sure I have," returned the lady still more sharply,—“and saw nothing of the kind, I assure you. That girl's head will be turned by all the nonsense Grace talks about her admirers. There were other people in company to whom Mr. Arthur Bertram was far more attentive than to Beatrice, I can tell you.”

“Well, ma'am, that might be,” quoth Miss Babie, with the most irritating unconsciousness of the lady's meaning; “and very likely it was done on purpose, for a blind. I can assure you there's been a great deal said about Mr. Arthur and Miss Beattress this while back. I'm not at liberty to name names. It would ill become me, in my seeteation. But I can tell you from them that has had some opportunity of judging, that Mr. Arthur came home on purpose from a grand party in Perthshire, when he heard that your young ladies were staying with his sister (that was just before you come here, Mrs. Henry), and was just devoted to Miss Beattress while she was at Kingsconnell. And——”

“Stuff and nonsense!” interrupted her auditor, unable longer to contain her spiteful displeasure at hearing her step-daughter's name coupled with that of so distinguished a lover.

"The people in this little Scutch village have got nothing else to talk of but the Bertrams; and when they can find nothing that is true to gossip about, they invent a story. As if that handsome young man would look twice at a girl like Beatrice!"

Miss Babie Chisholm was too thorough a tuft-hunter to care much for the young Lockharts, who were not of sufficient consequence to ensure her regard; farther than as Beatrice was invested with the reflected light of Arthur Bertram's, and Helen with that of Walter Sempill's partiality; but she did care very much for her own credit as a retailer of authentic facts, and felt not a little affronted by Mrs. Henry Lockhart's impeachment of their authenticity. Determined, therefore, to afford her convincing proof, she proceeded to pour forth all the stores of information collected on the subject by herself; and still more by the doctor. She told how Mr. Arthur had often been seen walking in the woods with Miss Beattress, and in particular just before he left home; and how all the household had remarked his low spirits at that time, and how little the tidings of his illness afterwards had surprised any one. But here Mrs. Lockhart

broke in with a scornful laugh. No—she thought no one need have been surprised, or have gone very far to look for the reason of his being in low spirits, poor young man! with a fever hanging about him at the time. If *that* were all Miss Chisholm had to say——! Miss Babie begged Mrs. Henry's pardon, it was *not* all she had to say. Everybody had observed Mr. Arthur and Miss Beattress the day that wonderful man from London,—what did they call him?—preached at the Hunter's Hope; and thereupon followed an exaggerated detail of that day's proceedings. And she, Miss Babie, must really say, that when a young gentleman was in the habit of paying visits to a young lady, alone in her own parlour,—“the school-room you know, mem,”—she parenthetically added, and going up the garden-walk, and tapping at the window to be let in——.

“What?” exclaimed Mrs. Henry Lockhart. “You don't mean it, Miss Chisholm?”

“I wouldn't say it, mem, if I didn't mean it,” replied Miss Babie with some dignity. “I didn't see it done myself, but though I do not choose to name names, which would ill become me, in my seeteation, I have it from the person who did see it, and was given to understand

it was no new thing, but what happened constantly."

"Well, did I ever? No, I never!" ejaculated her guest; her displeasure almost merged in a feeling of malevolent gratification. "Commend me to your wise, learned, model young ladies for a little modest assurance, after all! What would mamma have said to me, if I had ever let a young gentleman tap at *my* window, I should be glad to know? Nice fun it must be for Mr. Arthur Bertram, indeed."

"Fun or no fun, mem," returned Miss Babie, "you may take my word for it, that'll be a match some day, if Sir Thomas does not put a spoke in the wheel."

"Which I should think he'd be pretty sure to do!" retorted Mrs. Henry Lockhart, tossing her head.

"Well, I don't know, I am sure, mem," rejoined the prudent Miss Babie, resolved to speak no evil of possible future dignities. "Miss Beattress is a very fine creature, and Mr. Arthur is but the second son; and no disparagement to him—I hope—but there comes Miss Willie, I declare!" And breaking off the thread of her discourse at the sight of that

lady advancing up the garden-walk, she hurried to open the front door, and admit her.

Shortly after this, the two visitors from the Grange took leave of Miss Babie, and pursued the path homeward, mutually exclaiming at the excessive cold ; which indeed was very great, and did not tend to sweeten the mood of either.

It was on the afternoon of this same day, just as the bleak twilight of January had fallen and shrouded all things in obscurity, that some accidental circumstance having delayed dinner, Beatrice and Helen had repaired to the school-room, after changing their dresses, there to pass the interval in reading by the fire-light ; when the former discovered that her volume of "Clarendon,"— a loan from Mr. Malcolm,—was missing, and recollected having left it in the morning, in the window at the end of the drawing-room, just opposite the door of entrance, whither she accordingly proceeded to look for it. By this door she quietly went in, herself unheard, and unconscious that there was any one in the apartment,—crossed it, and bent forward to search for her book amongst several on a little table in the recess of the

window, which was narrow and deep. While thus occupied, she was startled by the voice of her father, from beside the fire-place, at the other end of the long room.

"Have you considered what we were talking of this morning, Mary Anne, about our future plans?"

"Yes, that I have," replied his lady from the other side of the fire, in a sharp and resolute tone.

"I hope to some purpose? I hope to find you more reasonable? I cannot keep dragging on any longer here, but I am most unwilling to leave until I find you disposed to enter into my wishes."

"If you mean about your daughters living with us, Harry, and being left with me when you go to sea, as you tell me you mean to do some time, I am afraid you are sadly wasting your time in waiting for me to agree to that, as I have often told you before;" was the reply, delivered in a tone of sullen determination.

Beatrice stayed for no more. She felt that this discussion was not meant for her, and snatching up the volume which she had at last discovered, she stole with a rapid and noiseless step from the room, every nerve in her frame

tingling as she did so. Just as she reached the door, she caught the first words of a remonstrance from her father, uttered in a tone of pain, mortification, and almost hopelessness.

"Can you be serious, Mary Anne? My poor girls?" This was all that Beatrice heard. Her heart swelled to her throat. Her father was not then in reality the altered parent to them that he seemed. His heart was yearning to the children of his lost Beatrice; and the chilling reserve of his manner was only assumed to cover the pain he suffered in finding that the successor he had given their mother was not disposed to enter into his feelings, or even to admit of their indulgence. Painful as the discovery was, bitter as was the consciousness of being objects of dislike to their step-mother, there was something soothing, softening, in this enforced insight into their poor father's heart; and thus did she and Helen feel it, as together, on her return to the school-room, they sat talking and shedding tears over it. Even the sensation of relief in finding that they were not likely to be placed under Mrs. Henry Lockhart's guardianship, remained for the present in the back-ground, flung into shade by their intense sympathy with their father.

The dialogue, meanwhile, of which Beatrice had heard a part, proceeded in a tone which gradually became more and more vehement. To her husband's pathetic appeal to her womanly feeling on behalf of his motherless girls,—to whom, as he said, she had promised him to be a mother, and to restore to them in some measure the happy home which they had lost, Mrs. Henry Lockhart opposed an impregnable barrier of sulky resistance. "She had promised to feel as a mother to them; well and good? so she would have done if they had been little girls like Anna Mariar; though even Anna Mariar, as dear mamma said, looked ridiculously old to be *her* daughter. But the idea of *her* feeling as a mother to two great creatures, who looked more like her elder sisters than her daughters, was rather too much."

"Elder sisters! ridiculous! preposterous!" was her husband's indignant but most injudicious exclamation. "My dear Mary Anne, you are imposing upon yourself, or laughing at me. I entreat you, be serious. I am in no joking humour."

"Nor I neither, then, Cap'en Lockhart!" furiously retorted his lady. "I never was

farther from joking in my life, I'd have you to know. Did I marry you, when I might have had fifty better matches, and bring you the 'andsome fortune I did, to be treated in this way, and kept shut up in this dirty old den, forsooth, till I agree to take the burden of your two daughters off their own relations' hands? Joking, indeed! A pretty joke, truly!"

"Keep to the honest truth, my dear, whatever you say," replied her husband. "Confess that you are jealous of having two pretty step-daughters staying with you, but do not talk to me of *my* daughters being burdens upon any one. You know very well that their——their——their mother's little fortune,"—he uttered the words with an effort, "is settled upon them, and that, wherever they reside, it will be as equals, not dependants."

Mrs. Henry Lockhart had never seen her husband so completely roused and excited before; and even her shrewish spirit quailed, like a true bully, before the flash of his eye. But rallying in an instant, she returned to the charge. "Jealous, indeed! Cap'en Lockhart had better take care; he had better not provoke her, and compel her, in real earnest, to

‘speak the honest truth.’ She certainly had not spoken it yet. She had too much consideration for his feelings ; but if he provoked her, he *should* hear the reason why she objected to taking charge of his daughters.”

“What do you mean, Mary Anne ;” sternly demanded Captain Lockhart ; startled, as she intended him to be, by this threat.

“Oh ! no matter ! no matter ! the less said the better,” replied his lady, flinging herself back in her chair.

“But it *is* a matter ! and more *must* be said, I insist upon it !” returned he, advancing towards her. “What do you mean me to understand ?”

“Simply,” she replied with a virulent sneer, “that I do not choose to undertake the charge of young ladies who are such favourites with the gentlemen.”

“Favourites with gentlemen ! Explain yourself at once ! What *do* you mean ?” interrogated he husband.

“Mean ?” she said, raising her foot, and placing it on the bars of the grate, (“dear ! how cold it is to-night !”) I mean, that when I hear of Mr. Arthur Bertram boasting of the

pleasant hours he has passed with Miss Beatrice Lockhart, alone in the school-room at the Grange,—and of the clever way in which he contrived to get in at the window at such times, instead of coming round by the front-door,—I——”

She paused,—for the expression of her husband’s countenance startled even her. Captain Lockhart made one stride towards her, and seized her by the wrist.

“Mary Anne,” he said in a hoarse voice, “what is the meaning of this? Who dared to say so?”

“Leave go!” she pettishly exclaimed, twitching her arm from his grasp. “I should think the meaning was plain enough. Mr. Arthur Bertram said so, I have it on good authority.”

“Plain enough!” repeated her husband. “Who has dared to say that any—any—” his voice shook from passion——“any damned insolent puppy has presumed to assert such lies of a daughter of mine? Tell me this instant! I insist upon knowing.”

“Insist as you please,” retorted his lady. “I am not to be bullied, as you know of old. I do not choose to tell you who told me. As

to *lies*, you had better ask Miss Beatrice herself whether or not it is a lie that she has been in the habit of taking walks in the woods with Mr. Arthur Bertram, and of admitting him at the school-room window. Perhaps she'll tell you how far his boasts are well founded. At all events, he makes them, and I can only repeat that *I* do not mean to undertake the charge of any young ladies who are on such good terms with the gentlemen." And rising from her seat, without staying farther parley, she swept from the room.

Captain Lockhart, his blood boiling in his veins, would have rushed at once to his daughter, and demanded of her the truth of these assertions; but just as he was making towards the door for that purpose, his steps were arrested by the sound of the dinner-bell, and the voices of his mother and Miss Willie, approaching the room. To take any farther notice at this time of anything that had been said, was clearly impossible, and he was perforce compelled to what seemed to him the almost impracticable task of hiding, as best he might, the tempest which his wife's diabolical malevolence had stirred up in his bosom. The party assembled at the dinner-table, Mrs.

Henry Lockhart, all smiles and talk ; the latter more pointedly than usual addressed to Miss Grace,—but apparently in a much more agreeable and amiable mood than she had exhibited for many days past. Beatrice and Helen felt their hearts full of affectionate sympathy with their father, and more eager than ever to watch for the smallest sign of the affection which they now knew him to be painfully suppressing. It may therefore be imagined with what a deadly chilling weight his aspect and manner during this day's meal, fell upon their sensitive hearts. Captain Lockhart was more, far more than usually, cold, silent, even stern. He scarcely uttered a word, or looked at his daughters, when obliged to offer them anything at table. The same state of things continued throughout the long weary evening, till at last supper and prayers were over, and the family about to separate for the night ; when, as the two girls timidly approached to kiss their father, he pressed his lips to Helen's cheek ;—then, turning to Beatrice, desired her to remain behind the rest, as he had something to say to her. Without an idea what it might be, she complied ; and Helen, somewhat curious, lingeringly withdrew ; observing, with wonder, a

triumphant sneer and toss of the head from her step-mother, as she preceded her up stairs.

Captain Lockhart no sooner found himself alone with his daughter, than he went towards the door, and closed it; then turned, placed himself with his back to the fire, and looked her sternly in the face.

"Beatrice," he said, "I have some questions to put to you."

Beatrice drew near, and stood beside him. "Well, dear papa?" she replied.

"*Well?*" was his indignant rejoinder. "Anything but well, Beatrice. Things have this very day come to my knowledge, as having been said of you, which I could not have believed of your sainted mother's daughter. I must apply to you for an explanation of what has reached my ears.

Pale, terrified, and trembling from head to foot, Beatrice stood with her eyes fixed upon her father, unable at first to conjecture what he meant; then with a strange, rushing, dizzying sound in her ears, which seemed to render all indistinct to her perceptions, so that it was with difficulty she comprehended that she was accused of having carried on a clandestine intercourse with Arthur Bertram,—of having

walked out to meet him, unknown to the rest of her family, and even of having privately admitted him into the house. Bewildered and confused as she was, and ever prone to self-accusation, she listened for some time in humble silence, to her father's indignant denunciations of such conduct; nor was it until after the lapse of a few minutes that she began to perceive how grossly it had been exaggerated to him.

"Papa, dear papa!" she at last found breath to say, as Captain Lockhart came to a pause. "Forgive me! I know—I see,—it was wrong; but indeed, indeed, whoever was cruel enough to tell you all this in so harsh a spirit, has told you much that is not the case. There never was anything clandestine in my acquaintance with Mr. Bertram. It is quite true that he frequently came, long ago, with Emily, to the school-room window, and several times this summer and the last by himself; but Miss Winter was often in the room, and Helen always; and I never saw him either in that way or out walking, that I did not mention it to Aunt Grace. She can tell you so if you ask her. I—I—I know if mamma had been alive—I—but I have had no one——."

Poor Beatrice's voice failed her at the mention of her mother, and she burst into an agony of tears.

Captain Lockhart cleared his voice,—made a step forward, then checked himself. His impulse was to catch his daughter in his arms, and implore her to forget the pain he had caused her,—but pride, reserve, and an indignant recollection of his wife's 'base insinuations, whose utter falsehood he could not guess, respecting the way in which Arthur Bertram was said to have talked of Beatrice,—all withheld him. He stood silent for a little space, gazing at her, as she sat sobbing by the table, her face buried in her handkerchief.

"If this be true, Beatrice," he at last hesitatingly began.

"It is,—it *is* true, papa!" she said, looking up through her tears. "I never deceived you. I have been a motherless, undirected creature. I have often done wrong, I know; but have pity on me, papa! Do not speak so sternly! I grieve to have offended you."

"Offended *me*, Beatrice? If that were all! But to think—to think of her folly! Idiot that she has been! I know it is your Aunt Grace who has encouraged this, Beatrice, in-

stead of warning you, as she ought to have done. I know it!" And he strode impatiently up and down the room, stamping his heel against the floor, in the uncontrollable irritation of his feelings.

"Do not, dear papa, do not blame poor Aunt Grace!" exclaimed Beatrice. "She may have erred in judgment, but she has been so kind to me."

"Kind!—*kind!*" he reiterated. "Valuable kindness! to lead a thoughtless girl to commit herself in this fatal way! To put it in the power of a heartless coxcomb to boast—and be damned to him!—to *boast* of his intimacy with her! The very thought of it is——"

"If a thunderbolt had fallen at Beatrice's feet, she could not have started from her chair with a face more ghastly pale; her white quivering lips apart,—every trace of tears dried on her dilated eyes. "Papa!" she exclaimed. "Papa! what did you say? Who told you that? It was a malignant falsehood, whoever did!"

"It is no falsehood, Beatrice!" he sternly replied. "I would give more than I can say to be able to think it a falsehood. As to who told me, that is no concern of yours."

"Papa!" reiterated Beatrice, her spirit rising under the goading of intense misery, "I have a right to know who it was presumed to say that—that Arthur Bertram had——. It is false, papa! It is a cruel falsehood! Tell me, tell me who said it! I have a right to know."

"You have none," replied her father. "I have no right to betray another person. Had I not heard it from the best authority, it never should have reached your ears. But that the heartless, unmanly coxcomb, in whose power your own fatal imprudence and your aunt's have placed you, *has* so taken advantage of it, I fear is too true. Your own hands have prepared your own bitter cup, my poor, misguided girl! and no one can avert it from you. All that can be done now, is to put an end, at once and for ever, to an intercourse which has caused such irreparable mischief; and I think you can scarce require my bidding to oblige you to do this."

"Papa," repeated Beatrice, clasping her hands in agony, "tell me who said it? You do not know how wretched you are making me. Tell me, papa!"

"I cannot, Beatrice, and I will not. Go to bed. No more can be said upon the subject.

Go to bed, my—my poor motherless girl!" exclaimed the father, in an uncontrollable burst of affection, clasping her in his arms as he spoke. "God forgive me for having deserted you as I did, my children! God forgive me! I am sufficiently punished."

He stayed no farther entreaty, but snatching up his candle, hastily left the room. Beatrice calmly and mechanically took up hers likewise, extinguished the lights upon the table, and quitted the parlour; but not for her own apartment. To go to bed, to be beside her sister, beside any human being, she felt to be impossible. She was conscious of a wild desire to rush from the house, out into the open air, amongst the woods; to be alone, where the cries of agony, which it would have been a relief if she could have uttered, would have been unheard. But this could not be. She went to the school-room, locked the door, placed her candle on the table, and then, yielding to the impulse of despairing misery, threw herself upon the floor, and gave way to a torrent of sobs and tears.

That was a dreadful night! Nothing in this world is so dreadful as that first rending of the veil from the eyes of a passionate and

imaginative nature in early youth. Nothing but the wonderful regenerative power of youth could enable any one to survive the suffering which a few such hours may clasp within their space. The grief of early youth is ungoverned, uncontrolled by the calmer experience that comes to advancing life. In poor Beatrice it amounted to despair. The idea, the bare idea, that Arthur Bertram, the idol of her heart and imagination,—the being whom she almost worshipped, could thus basely have abused her innocent trust in him; that he could have sought her society, taken advantage of her imprudence and ignorance of the world, made himself her companion and friend as he had done,—and then—*boasted* of it,—was as if a barbed arrow had transfixed her very heart. The slight to herself—the implied accusation of her conduct,—these were dreadful enough. Torturing enough it was to think that in weakness and want of self-respect she should have laid herself open to such accusations; but what was this thought to the agony of finding treachery—dishonourable feeling, and contemptible coxcombry, in the man whose image was enshrined in her heart as the realization of its most perfect ideal? It is

a fearful thing for the human heart when the hand, either of God or man, breaks its idols.

For hours the unhappy girl remained where she had flung herself down; her whole being absorbed in a wild sense of misery and desolation, mingled with a bitter dash of self-reproach and shame. Again and again she raised herself, resolved to be strong,—to restrain these bursts of anguish,—to retire to rest; and again, and yet again, overcome by a fresh rush of pain and agony, did she sink down, clasping her hands over her face with the same despairing ejaculation—“Arthur! oh! Arthur, Arthur!” It was not until fairly exhausted that she at length rose up, and slowly and shiveringly withdrew; a burden, as of ages of suffering, weighing down her heart and frame.

Helen had long been asleep. She lay, in her innocent repose, lovely and tranquil as a slumbering child; a smile upon her lips, and her long, black eye-lashes resting on her damask cheek. Beatrice gazed on her for a moment. “Oh!” she exclaimed to herself, “may she never, never know the misery that I have endured to-night!” Turning from that sweet picture, and placing her candle on the dressing-table, she almost started at the reflec-

tion in the glass of her own face, blanched to a deadly whiteness, and forming a strange contrast to the disordered tresses of her hair, and her dark eyes, swollen and heavy with excessive weeping. Years seemed to have passed over her, and left their abiding traces there, since last the same glass had shewn her countenance. Weary and worn out as she was, she felt a longing for rest, and a desire to forget herself in sleep. But even in sleep that miserable night there was no forgetfulness for her. She slumbered only to reproduce in dreams, under every variety of painful and harassing combination, the terrible scene of the preceding evening; and to be haunted by the image of Arthur, in all manner of circumstances,—to be walking with him in the summer-woods, sitting with him on the lime-tree seat, listening to his voice,—gazing into his impassioned eyes; yet all the while, with a vague, mysterious consciousness of something wrong, sad, and incomprehensible, lurking beneath the surface of happiness. Then she would start from one of these dreams of him, with this haunting impression following her into waking life,—gradually disentangling itself from the visions of sleep, and assuming at last a distinct and pal-

pable form of wretchedness that rushed back upon her brain as if a dagger pierced it. Long, dreary, and miserable was the night, and drearier still the breaking of the joyless winter dawn. To her latest hour, Beatrice never forgot the sense of utter desolation with which she watched its approach. A strangely-different scene, meanwhile, had this same night presented with Arthur! It is well, and yet *not* well, for those who love, that no Agrippa's glass can now be found to restore the image of the absent. How often does it thence occur that—

“One haply revels at the feast, while one may weep alone!”

END OF VOL. II.







